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Humanitarian affairs segment

Provisional summary record of the 32nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Park In-kook (Vice-President) ..... (Republic of Korea)

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In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

Election of a member to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/2008/9/Add.14)

1. **The President** invited the Council to elect, by secret ballot, one member from the Group of Asian States to fill a vacancy which would arise from the resignation of Ms. Xiaomei Qin (China) on 31 December 2008.

2. *At the invitation of the President, Mr. Flores (Bolivia) and Mr. Skau (Sweden) acted as tellers.*

3. *A vote was taken by secret ballot:*

Number of ballot papers:	*43*
Invalid ballots:	*3*
Number of valid ballots:	*40*
Number of members voting:	*40*
Required majority:	*21*
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. Eugenio A. Insigne (Philippines):	*22*
Mr. Berenado Vunibobo (Fiji):	*18*

4. *Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Eugenio A. Insigne (Philippines) was elected a member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for a term beginning on 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2010.*

Elections postponed from the previous session

Commission for Social Development

5. **The President** informed the Council that Gabon had been endorsed by the Group of African States to fill the remaining vacancy on the Commission for Social Development allotted to that Group for a four-year term beginning at the first meeting of the Commission's forty-eighth session, in 2009, and expiring at the close of the Commission's fifty-first session, in 2013. He took it that the Council wished to elect Gabon by acclamation.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **The President** said that he took it that, in the absence of any other candidates for election to the Commission for Social Development, the Council wished to further postpone the election to the Commission of one member from the Group of Eastern European States and two members from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the same term of office.

8. *It was so decided.*

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

9. **The President** informed the Council that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been endorsed by the Group of African States to fill the remaining vacancy on the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice allotted to that Group for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2009. He took it that the Council wished to elect the Democratic Republic of the Congo by acclamation.

10. *It was so decided.*

Commission on Science and Technology for Development

11. **The President** informed the Council that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea had been endorsed by the Group of African States to fill the remaining vacancies allotted to that Group for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2009. He took it that the Council wished to elect them by acclamation.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **The President** said that he took it that, in the absence of any other candidates for election to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Council wished to further postpone the election to the Commission of one member from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and two members from the Group of Western European and other States for the same term of office.

14. *It was so decided.*

Programme Coordination Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

15. **The President** informed the Council that the Congo had been endorsed by the Group of African States to fill the remaining vacancy on the Programme Coordination Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS for a three-year term

beginning on 1 January 2009. He took it that the Council wished to elect the Congo by acclamation.

16. *It was so decided.*

Nomination postponed from a previous session

Committee for Programme and Coordination

17. **The President** informed the Council that the Group of African States had endorsed the nomination of the Central African Republic for election by the General Assembly to the Committee for Programme and Coordination. He took it that the Council wished to nominate the Central African Republic for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2009.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The President** said that he took it that the Council wished to further postpone the nomination of three members from the Group of Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly to the Committee for the same term of office.

20. *It was so decided.*

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/63/81-E/2008/71 and A/63/84-E/2008/80)

21. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) said that the frequent and serious natural disasters of recent years, and their social, economic and environmental consequences, had given a new dimension to the responsibility of States and the international community for preventing such disasters, managing humanitarian assistance and finding solutions to climate change-related issues. The report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/63/81-E/2008/71) highlighted the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Asia, the region worst affected by natural disasters, and Africa, which also faced complex emergencies due to persistent armed conflict leading to the mass displacement of people, increased vulnerability of disadvantaged segments and greater poverty. In addition, the impact of climate change and rising food and oil prices were undermining Governments' efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

22. His delegation therefore agreed with the Secretary-General that humanitarian assistance should be better coordinated. It also stressed the guiding principles and provisions of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 62/94 and supported implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 on building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, in particular by providing appropriate levels of resources for disaster risk reduction and preparedness, and response to humanitarian emergencies, with close cooperation between the United Nations system and national authorities.

23. Other remaining challenges to be addressed included capacity-building, the development of partnerships and the need to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and safeguard access to humanitarian assistance, while ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law.

24. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein) said that the Council's humanitarian affairs segment provided an important opportunity to address key challenges such as mitigating the humanitarian consequences of the global food crisis and ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

25. The dramatic increase in food and commodity prices since the beginning of 2008 had posed major challenges for countries relying heavily on food imports. The complex and interlinked causes of the food crisis should be addressed without delay by all States and the appropriate international organizations. The development of a comprehensive framework for action by the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis was to be welcomed, but that framework must be constantly updated and further developed by the relevant United Nations actors.

26. Emergency measures should be put in place to mitigate the effects of poor harvests, natural disasters, high oil prices and commodity speculation. At the same time, State-imposed policies must not exacerbate the structural rise in food prices. The export restrictions imposed by major exporters of staple foods and the large-scale opening up of markets by major importers to secure local supplies could have fatal consequences. Food supplies needed for humanitarian purposes must also be allowed to circulate without hindrance and more donors should do as Liechtenstein had done, increasing non-earmarked contributions to the World Food Programme to make its crisis response more flexible.

27. The safety and security of humanitarian and United Nations personnel was of the utmost importance. Deliberate attacks against United Nations field missions, such as the recent deadly operation against the joint United Nations-African Union force in Darfur, led to unacceptable constraints in access to populations in need and constituted war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. While welcoming the fact that the text of the draft Council resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, currently under discussion, urged Member States to ensure that perpetrators of crimes committed on their territory against humanitarian personnel were brought to justice, he hoped that future resolutions would acknowledge the particular vulnerability of locally recruited humanitarian workers to such attacks. He also called for the Secretary-General and Member States to give urgent consideration to the recommendations of the report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises Worldwide.

28. **Mr. Benfreha** (Algeria) said that, humanitarian emergencies worsened by the combined effect of climate change, armed conflict and the food crisis, made it all the more important to enhance the coordination of humanitarian assistance within the United Nations system and with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

29. As General Assembly resolution 46/182 on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations was the reference framework for the provision of assistance, all responses to humanitarian emergencies should be governed by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The complex emergencies of the previous year had tested those principles, thereby causing conceptual and operational problems. All efforts to coordinate humanitarian assistance should respect the national sovereignty, integrity and unity of States, give priority to the decisions of national authorities and seek to improve national ownership of humanitarian assistance through capacity-building.

30. To ensure a well-managed and well-coordinated transition to rehabilitation and development, humanitarian assistance should be seen as part of a long-term process rather than a substitute for development assistance. The delivery of humanitarian assistance could also be made more credible and effective by strengthening the role of representative NGOs in the affected countries. Mindful of the ongoing need to develop synergies and cooperation between the institutions delivering humanitarian assistance, the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis should focus on developing appropriate coordinated responses over the short, medium and long term to facilitate access to food.

31. **Mr. Amil** (Pakistan) said that natural disasters, compounded by climatic effects and the soaring price of food, not only retarded the economic and social development of vulnerable groups, particularly the poor, but also hampered many countries' ability to progress towards development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Consequently, post-disaster emergency assistance should not be viewed separately from humanitarian and development assistance. Emergency assistance, rehabilitation and long-term development were linked and should be recognized as different stages of a coordinated effort.

32. Recalling that the recent first meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum had marked a step in increasing the newly strengthened Council's coordination role within the United Nations system, particularly with regard to humanitarian assistance, he said humanitarian actors within and outside that system should engage with national and regional authorities to improve the overall adequacy, predictability, accountability and deployment of resources, as part of an effort to strengthen disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness in developing countries. Moreover, humanitarian response should be governed by the respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States enshrined in General Assembly resolution 46/182 with assistance being determined by actual needs and delivered by impartial and neutral actors, taking care to maintain fully the civilian character of the humanitarian response.

33. The affected State should play a primary role in the initiation, identification, coordination and delivery of assistance. Humanitarian workers' access to those in need depended closely on effective and timely coordination with national and local authorities on the ground. Predictable and sustainable funding should be established for all humanitarian emergencies, and funding gaps — particularly those for post-disaster recovery — should be addressed. The structure for

regular reporting, management and contributions provided by the Central Emergency Response Fund was positive, and should focus on vital assistance in the initial phases of emergencies.

34. **Mr. Vasquez Romero** (El Salvador), emphasizing the importance of capacity-building to improve disaster preparedness and post-disaster assistance, recalled that the existing problems of climate change and armed conflict had been exacerbated by rising food and fuel costs, leading at times to violent protests and endangering food security, especially in developing countries.

35. Inspired by priority five of the Hyogo Framework for Action to build resilience to disasters, El Salvador had established a national platform for disaster risk reduction, backed up by local plans. Recognizing the close links between emergency response, rehabilitation and development, it had also established a national service for regional surveys, to provide continuous monitoring of natural phenomena. Special attention had been focused on the country's most vulnerable areas. While the country's civil authorities played a key role in managing the response to disasters because their close links with local communities improved the sustainability of disaster response, its armed forces also provided essential assistance because of their logistical and material infrastructure.

36. The role of the Central Emergency Response Fund was vital in improving the capacity for emergency assistance and ensuring that the most vulnerable, particularly those who were the victims of forgotten disasters, received help.

37. **Mr. Kim** Bong-hyun (Republic of Korea) said that the theme of the humanitarian affairs segment, "building capabilities and capacities at all levels for timely humanitarian assistance, including disaster risk reduction", reflected the need for an effective and coordinated response to serious and complex humanitarian challenges, especially in the light of climate change, global food price increases and the energy crisis. Recognizing that preventive action was more valuable than attempts to address disasters after they had occurred, and that national and regional disaster preparedness and reduction capabilities were vital, he said that the Republic of Korea was participating actively in regional efforts to build a disaster management and emergency response system.

38. The Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis had sounded a warning, making clear the need for global food security and poverty reduction. The crisis could become an opportunity if the international community reinforced humanitarian aid, strengthened social safety nets, increased food production and adjusted trade and taxation policies. The Government of the Republic of Korea was committed to providing humanitarian assistance through international organizations and to helping to increase developing countries' agricultural productivity.

39. The Republic of Korea supported efforts to increase humanitarian response capacity, predictability and accountability. As the rapid delivery of relief goods and services to those in need was the key to successful assistance, the restriction of humanitarian workers' access to recipients, and the growing number of attacks on such workers, were grave challenges. National authorities should take every possible step to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. Acknowledging the need to mainstream the issue of gender into humanitarian response efforts and inter-agency coordination of such efforts, the Republic of Korea welcomed the progress made in updating the policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on gender equality in humanitarian action, and the launching of the United Nations action against sexual violence in crisis.

40. **Mr. Cancela** (Uruguay) applauded the efforts of the many humanitarian workers who risked their own lives to help those in need. The safety of such workers should be protected. In the view of his delegation, the Council's humanitarian affairs segment should help to build an environment of trust in humanitarian action, emphasizing that such action should be undertaken in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence established by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182.

41. The quality and speed of emergency response measures could only be improved if humanitarian workers were given access to those in need. It was unfortunate that the Secretary-General was forced to point out repeatedly that obstacles to such access remained even when international humanitarian law decreed that it should be provided. Efforts to prevent and alleviate suffering among the most vulnerable victims of humanitarian emergencies, especially

women and children, should continue. As humanitarian intervention was intrinsically a civilian undertaking, there should be a suitable connection between the emergency response activities of State entities and civil society organizations. Moreover, those organizations' contribution to the global response to emergencies should be properly recognized.

42. As the effects of climate change and the food crisis had clear effects on humanitarian assistance needs, the multiple causes of those phenomena should be addressed, ensuring that the most vulnerable were protected, that regional variations in the food security situation were taken into account and that the need for capacity-building and sustainability was considered. Local communities were the first responders in the wake of a disaster, and they remained in place after the situation had been stabilized, facing the task of reabsorbing refugees and returnees. While the primary responsibility for emergency response lay with the State in which a disaster occurred, the international community should ensure that assistance was available. The international community should also consider the social and economic impact of humanitarian emergencies on the development of the affected countries, particularly those already suffering from extreme poverty.

43. **Mr. Siles Alvarado** (Bolivia) said that the severity, frequency and magnitude of natural disasters demonstrated the need for a more efficient and effective international response mechanism. Coordination between donors and recipients should be strengthened, so that international humanitarian assistance could be channelled quickly to the most vulnerable sectors. It was important to recognize the link between emergency assistance, rehabilitation and long-term development.

44. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) enabled the United Nations to respond to natural disasters in a timely manner and provided an appropriate mechanism for responding to the demands of affected countries. However, humanitarian assistance must not be politicized or made conditional upon compliance with requests that violated the sovereignty of States; rather, it must be unconditional and channelled through affected countries' own organizations, with humanitarian organizations playing an advisory and supervisory role.

45. Bolivia had experienced severe flooding in the past three years. As at 31 March 2008, over 97,000 families throughout the country had been affected, more than 49,000 of them directly. In response, humanitarian assistance had been provided by the National Civil Defence System, supported by international humanitarian agencies. The United Nations system, in cooperation with the competent national bodies, had launched an international appeal for assistance for the affected families. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) had approved requests exceeding $2 million, executed by various United Nations agencies through projects drawn up jointly with the Emergency Operations Centre and the Department of Civil Defence and International Cooperation. With a view to maximizing effectiveness, the Ministry of National Defence and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had signed an agreement for the administration of external donor funds.

46. At the national level, his Government had approved Supreme Decree No. 29308, which required all economic resources, donations and transfers to be registered, regardless of their origin; some of those resources were administered directly by such entities as United Nations agencies, NGOs and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

47. At the subregional level, the Andean Community had decided to allow third countries to join the Community as associate members, thereby paving the way for the incorporation of other countries from the region and joint responses to emergencies. The fact that Chile and the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) were now associate members would facilitate implementation of the project entitled "Support for Disaster Prevention in the Andean Community" (PREDECAN Project), the main objective of which was to support institutional capacity-building.

48. Noting with concern that most of the Organization's humanitarian responses had been essentially palliative in nature, he stressed the importance of preventive measures. His delegation strongly condemned the acts of aggression that were behind most requests for humanitarian assistance and pointed out that such assistance only alleviated the horrors of war.

49. The parameters of sustainable development should be redefined, taking as a starting point the need

to protect the planet. Consumption patterns must be changed, the exploitation and use of natural resources optimized and steps taken to prevent new energy sources from becoming the main causes of the global food crisis. The best humanitarian assistance that the world could offer current and future generations consisted of a more rational planning of its actions.

50. Lastly, on behalf of the people and Government of Bolivia, he expressed profound sympathy for the innocent victims of the violence in Darfur and condemned all acts of violence against humanitarian workers in conflict zones.

51. **Ms. Jayasuriya** (Sri Lanka) said that the increasing incidence and intensity of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies in recent years and, currently, soaring food and fuel prices called for concerted and coordinated responses at all levels. The theme of the 2008 humanitarian affairs segment was, therefore, pertinent and timely.

52. Her delegation reaffirmed that the State had primary responsibility for caring for the victims of humanitarian emergencies and emphasized the importance of full respect for the humanitarian principles set out in resolution 46/182 during the provision of humanitarian assistance at the request and with the consent of the affected State. While effective and efficient management of existing resources and enhanced coordination among national and local institutions were essential, increasingly complex and transnational challenges called for closer coordination and cooperation among nations. The unprecedented scale of recent natural disasters demonstrated the important role of international assistance and cooperation in facilitating and strengthening national response capacity.

53. Sri Lanka had been afflicted by terrorism for over two decades. Despite many challenges, her Government had continued to provide timely and adequate emergency humanitarian relief to people living in areas affected by the conflict. While such relief was key to overcoming the immediate effects of humanitarian disasters, rehabilitation and long-term development were also essential. Accordingly, Sri Lanka's post-tsunami recovery had been based on a gradual transition from the provision of emergency relief to the establishment of sustainable livelihood and development programmes. In that regard, she welcomed the international community's continued support for the transfer of technology, knowledge and funding to further develop national disaster preparedness and response capacity.

54. Recalling priority five of the Hyogo Framework for Action, she said that her Government had made disaster management a national priority by, inter alia, approving the 2005 Disaster Management Act, launching the disaster risk reduction road map for the period 2005-2015, establishing an early warning system and designing disaster mapping and evaluation programmes.

55. She welcomed the various recent United Nations system initiatives, including the High-level Conference on World Food Security held in Rome. Severe droughts, frequent floods and virulent epidemics had taken a toll on the populations and economic potential of developing countries and undermined their efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. She endorsed the call for more research into the link between the humanitarian consequences of climate change and the need for greater investment in disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

56. While recognizing the need for early implementation of the Bali Action Plan established at the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference, she emphasized that developing countries should have a mechanism for engaging in carbon trading and trading in the value placed on their forest cover. Technological and financial assistance would help developing countries adopt environmentally friendly approaches to development, while the establishment of a climate change adaptation fund would greatly assist vulnerable States.

57. When addressing the humanitarian implications of climate change, emphasis had often been placed on the use of alternative and eco-friendly energy sources. However, the challenges and opportunities associated with increased biofuel use had added a new dimension to humanitarian emergencies, and increasing demand for food had caused price hikes and undermined developing countries' efforts to reduce by half the number of people affected by poverty and hunger. Lastly, increased demand for humanitarian assistance called for increased material and human resources; her Government looked forward to working with international agencies and donor countries in that regard.

58. **Ms. Alzhanova** (Kazakhstan) said that the United Nations should be commended for its role in mobilizing the international response to the recent series of humanitarian emergencies. Kazakhstan was providing assistance to the victims of disasters, and since 2007 had hosted the office of the Regional Disaster Response Adviser for Central Asia of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Currently under discussion was the establishment of a regional warehouse for emergency relief which would strengthen the logistical position of United Nations entities.

59. As no single country or agency was capable of responding to a disaster, efforts should be combined and coordinated. The immediate-response capabilities of the Central Emergency Response Fund should be improved. In the context of disaster preparedness, a code of conduct for emergency response efforts should be widely disseminated to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable, including women, children and the elderly, were addressed. Conscious of the regional and global implications of disasters, Kazakhstan was devoting close attention to the Aral Sea, and urged the United Nations system to help to institutionalize the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, in order to attract more international expertise and avert environmental crisis.

60. **Mr. Mashabane** (Observer for South Africa) reiterated South Africa's commitment to resolution 46/182. The principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence should remain the basis of all humanitarian responses and guide the efficiency and coordination of humanitarian assistance. While his delegation agreed that the State had primary responsibility to protect victims of humanitarian emergencies and that the sovereignty of States must be protected when providing relief, current global crises demonstrated the need to further strengthen international assistance efforts.

61. Natural disasters and extreme weather events had lasting consequences on affected populations and adversely affected both the environment and socio-economic development. Disaster management and humanitarian assistance should be viewed within the context of sustainable development and, therefore, as a critical factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations development agenda. As developing countries' disaster risk reduction capacity was generally limited, knowledge and expertise should be transferred from developed to developing countries. In that regard, his Government welcomed the establishment of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and would continue to support initiatives aimed at assisting developing countries investing in early warning systems.

62. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was an important instrument for addressing funding gaps in respect of rapid-onset and under-funded crises. The recent external evaluation had clearly demonstrated its effectiveness in improving predictability: despite constituting only 4 per cent of annual global humanitarian assistance it had covered 72 per cent of the funding requested in consolidated appeals and flash appeals in 2007. Even so, the international community must continue to provide additional resources for the Fund to ensure that the humanitarian community's financial needs were met fully. Making needs-based humanitarian assistance more effective was a key part of strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance. To that end, the needs of vulnerable communities must drive humanitarian responses. Assessment and data collection must be strengthened to provide effective information for Governments, humanitarian actors and donors. In that connection, South Africa looked forward to participating in the CERF evaluation later in 2008; would continue supporting the Fund; and was proud to be among the top 25 contributors to it.

63. Welcoming the establishment of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the adoption of the Declaration on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, South Africa fully supported the call in that Declaration for the international community to take urgent and coordinated action to combat the negative impacts on the most vulnerable of soaring food prices, and to help developing countries and countries in transition to expand agriculture and food production and increase public and private investment in agriculture, agribusiness and rural development. Furthermore, donors should continue to be engaged in ensuring the effectiveness of United Nations action and make more funding available to cope with the demands of the global food crisis and other humanitarian emergencies. Moreover, the Organization's food-related agencies should continue to be allowed to

stimulate local food production through procurement at the national level.

64. Financial assistance should continue to flow to developing countries to reduce existing risks and prevent the emergence of new risks. Greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening the financial mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and establishing sustainable funding for underresourced sectors. Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance remained critical. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs could assist by making the role of Humanitarian Coordinator fully effective and adopting a well-developed and interactive cluster approach, bearing in mind Governments' leadership role.

65. Lastly, his delegation strongly condemned the recent senseless killing of humanitarian personnel, called on all Member States to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel working in their territory, and expressed appreciation to all those humanitarian personnel who chose to serve the needs of communities at risk.

66. **Mr. de Looz Karageorgiades** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) welcomed the holding of the first Development Cooperation Forum and the adoption of the 2008 ministerial declaration, which highlighted a number of challenges requiring urgent and collective action by the international community. The Order of Malta's new Grand Master had led humanitarian missions in Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo and closely followed international events and recommendations. The Order, which enjoyed diplomatic relations with over 100 countries, remained faithful to its original mission of helping the sick, the poor and the underprivileged, regardless of their race, origin or religion. It was present on five continents, with 12,500 members, 80,000 volunteers and 11,000 qualified medical personnel in 120 countries.

67. His delegation had noted with interest the observations, conclusions and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/81-E/2008/71), particularly those relating to the need for humanitarian assistance to be conducted in compliance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Those principles were at the heart of the activities of the Order and, in particular, of Malteser International, established in 2005 to create a link between emergency assistance, recovery and development assistance and to respond rapidly to crisis situations. His delegation agreed that new patterns of hunger required strengthened partnerships.

68. The various meetings in the economic and social field scheduled for 2008 provided a good opportunity for the international community to review and improve its development policies. The Order of Malta stood ready to contribute to that process and to reaffirm fundamental values and respect for human rights, in order to achieve peace and security throughout the world.

69. **Mr. Osman** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the Council's capacity-building discussion was particularly relevant to the international Red Cross movement, whose emphasis was on humanitarian assistance and capacity-building at the community and national levels. When communities were stronger and nations were better able to address the vital needs of the population, whether in emergencies or longer-term development, the demands for international assistance were dramatically diminished.

70. It should be remembered that invariably the first on the scene in a disaster or in ravaged villages, towns and cities was the local Red Cross or Red Crescent volunteer. Volunteers and the communities from which they were drawn were the critical hub for effective action, and the foundation for national capacity in disaster preparedness, risk reduction and initial response operations. IFRC pleaded for more investment in its work.

71. The Hyogo Framework for Action was particularly relevant to natural disasters and climate change, but its ultimate goal was the building up of safer and more resilient communities. More explicit consideration should be given to the essential link between humanitarian assistance, recovery and longer-term risk reduction and development. At the International Red Cross Conference in November 2007, international disaster relief guidelines, incorporating international disaster-response laws, rules and principles, had been adopted to provide a stronger legal framework for domestic disaster response. As United Nations Members took up those guidelines, the international humanitarian response to major disasters would become smoother and more effective. Member States were encouraged to turn to the National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies as

auxiliaries to their national authorities in the delivery of humanitarian services and to include them systematically in national platforms for disaster risk reduction.

72. Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian action always rested on full compliance with the fundamental humanitarian principles of the Red Cross movement, but IFRC was concerned that some of the other humanitarian actors were influenced by political or military objectives, and urged all Member States to ensure the observance of humanitarian principles.

73. The Red Cross movement appreciated the Secretary-General's concern for the protection and security of humanitarian personnel. Respect for the integrity of the protective emblems of the Red Cross and Red Crescent were a foundation of their humanitarian mission. They valued the strong collaborative relationship they had with United Nations agencies, and particularly with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

74. **Mr. Gonah** (Observer for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the Office actively participated in United Nations country team activities and the early recovery phase of humanitarian assistance. It was actively collaborating with the World Food Programme to mitigate the grave impact of the global rise in food prices on refugees and displaced persons; and was also working with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on agricultural safety-net activities to pave the way for them to become self-reliant. UNHCR was a part of the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and was also involving States in promoting self-sufficiency among the vulnerable populations it sought to help.

75. UNHCR was committed to helping States and communities better address the humanitarian implications of climate change as well, working closely with other humanitarian organizations, working groups and committees tackling that challenge. His Office was pleased that the Secretary-General had reaffirmed the cardinal principles of humanitarian action. In the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Office had led the process of drafting a background paper on humanitarian principles that was currently under discussion in that Committee in preparation for an inter-agency plan of action.

76. UNHCR welcomed the United Nations system-wide commitment to gender mainstreaming and its systematic promotion of gender equality, and endorsed the revised gender policy considered by the Council earlier in 2008. In using the considerable funding it had received from the Central Emergency Response Fund and other earmarked humanitarian funds, it had been the Office's experience that more was accomplished when there was a strong partnership within country teams. UNHCR would join actively in humanitarian financing discussions with all stakeholders. Massive human displacement and mixed migration flows, caused by whatever reason, could be tackled only by delivering as one, thereby providing more effective emergency humanitarian assistance.

77. **Mr. Gebre-Egziabher** (Observer for the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)) observed that in humanitarian situations worldwide, the highest concentrations of affected populations lived in urban settlements or had been forced to seek shelter there. It was the responsibility of national and local governments to ensure secure physical shelter for their population, and it was during crises that they were least able to do so, but also, ironically, it was then that the greatest potential development gains could be realized in the shortest possible time frame.

78. Recent disaster response had shown the effectiveness of a range of in situ, non-tent-based emergency shelter options, such as helping survivors build their own shelters from rubble or engaging them in communal clean-up and reconstruction as the first steps towards recovery. In the immediate aftermath of crises, UN-Habitat was primarily engaged in recommending alternative, culturally contextual, transitional shelter approaches, and in the process it exploited short-term emergency investments for longer-term developmental gain, thus potentially shortening the duration of crisis. Working with IFRC, UNHCR and a range of non-governmental organizations, it was providing forms of shelter other than tents or plastic sheeting throughout the world.

79. Directly involved in the establishment of the cluster system, UN-Habitat was the focal point agency for preparedness as well as initial response in the areas of housing, land and property. It was currently leading a group of 10 agencies working in those areas and had been leading efforts to develop tools and mechanisms for property restitution and land tenure rights in both customary and statutory systems. UN-Habitat had

become a full member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in June 2008 and had also received its first allocations from the Central Emergency Response Fund for work in Pakistan and Nepal. In the past decade, the Programme had conducted continuous operations in more than 35 countries and had drawn on its multidisciplinary expertise from normative and operational activities to respond to disasters and emergencies.

80. **Ms. Bilello** (Observer for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that her organization emphasized support for national priorities through capacity-building for disaster risk reduction and during the transitional phase between emergency relief and sustainable recovery. UNESCO responded particularly to requests for capacity-building in educational planning and management, teacher, technical and vocational training, non-formal and distance education and the development of effective early warning systems. It supported public and independent broadcast and other media, offered emergency culture and heritage support, particularly for the management of World Heritage sites. Most recently, it had led rapid sectoral missions to China and Myanmar in the area of education.

81. UNESCO covered many of the scientific disciplines of multihazard early warning systems under the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and administered educational projects in conjunction with the Strategy. UNESCO participated in the cluster system, in the education and early recovery clusters; and in 2008 had begun working with the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs on the subject of Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq, UNESCO was contributing to Iraqi capacity-building, not only in education, including distance education for internally displaced persons and refugees, but also in water resource management, media training in support of the electoral process, and cultural heritage safeguarding. In Afghanistan, the UNESCO literacy initiative for empowerment had been made the national framework for action by all those engaged in literacy activities in the country; in the first phase, aimed particularly at women, it hoped to include 300,000 throughout the country.

82. Through its work in the education cluster, UNESCO was advocating a coordinated humanitarian approach by the United Nations system to the early revitalization of educational systems in devastated areas, at every level of formal and non-formal education. At other times, UNESCO was called upon to make major, urgent interventions in the immediate aftermath of conflicts or disasters to protect World Heritage sites facing imminent and permanent destruction. Support for the cultural heritage could be intrinsic to peacebuilding and the sense of a return to normality for affected populations.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations E/2008/SR.33

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

15 September 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
Humanitarian affairs segment

Provisional summary record (partial)* of the 33rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 17 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Park In-kook (Vice-President) ..... (Republic of Korea)

Contents

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting. A panel discussion was conducted.

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

08-42710 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The discussion covered in the summary record began at 10.15 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

A panel discussion on the topic of "Humanitarian challenges related to global food aid, including enhancing international efforts and cooperation in this field" followed. The panel was chaired by Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Vice-President of the Council, and moderated by Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Panellists were Ms. Ismat Jahan, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations; Mr. John M. Powell, Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme; Ms. Louise Cord, Sector Manager, Poverty Reduction Group, World Bank; Mr. Jama Gulaid, Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund in Swaziland and Mr. Jim Butler, Deputy Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

United Nations E/2008/SR.34

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

15 September 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
Operational activities segment
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 18 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Jean-Marc Hoscheit ..... (Luxembourg)

Contents

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation:

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

General segment

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265, including 61/16

Coordination, programme and other questions

(c) International cooperation in the field of informatics

Economic and environmental questions

(b) Science and technology for development

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

08-42890 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation:

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/63/71-E/2008/46, A/63/85-E/2008/83, E/2008/49, E/2008/60, E/2008/CRP.4)

Draft resolution entitled "Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system" (E/2008/L.12)

1. **Mr. Gass** (Switzerland), introducing draft resolution E/2008/L.12, entitled "Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", drew attention to some minor editorial changes, introduced to align the language of the draft resolution with that of the triennial comprehensive policy review.

2. **The President** invited the Council to adopt draft resolution E/2008/L.12, noting that it contained no programme budget implications.

3. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.12, as orally revised, was adopted.*

4. **Mr. Heidt** (United States of America) said that while the resolution did contain important guidance for the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review, it lacked an element on one aspect of the review: assessing the results of United Nations development system activities and contributions to developing countries' capacity-building efforts. Furthermore, his delegation had reservations on paragraphs 7 and 13 of the resolution, which overstepped the normal practice that the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies provided operational guidance to those organizations' chief executives while the Economic and Social Council provided general policy orientation for the organizations' guidance.

5. **Ms. Greenaway** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the role and function of the Council, which was a principal organ of the United Nations system, should not be subverted. Any attempt to diminish its role as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to the Member States and the United Nations system, including all relevant entities, should be resisted.

6. **Mr. Mori** (Japan) welcomed the adoption of the resolution and expressed the hope that the Council would encourage the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to take practical and sound steps for implementing their respective tasks, with clear benchmarks and achievable targets in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/208. Japan remained committed to supporting the United Nations system to make a significant impact on the ground in programme countries.

Documents submitted under agenda item 3

7. **The President** drew the Council's attention to the following documents submitted under item 3:

- Actions taken by the executive boards and governing bodies of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies in the area of simplifications and harmonization of the United Nations development system (E/2008/CRP.4);
- Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund on its work during 2007 (E/2007/35);
- Report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (E/2008/5);
- Annual report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its first regular session of 2008 (E/2008/6 and Corr.1);
- Annual report of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme for 2007: Note by the Secretary-General (E/2008/14);
- Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its 2008 first regular session (E/2008/34 (Part I));

- Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its 2008 first regular session: Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP (E/2008/34 (Part I)/Add.1);
- Report of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme on the first and second regular sessions and annual session of 2007 (E/2008/36, Supp. No. 16);
- Extract from the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its 2008 annual session (E/2008/L.8).

8. *The Council took note of the documents submitted under item 3.*

9. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin) expressed concern at the growing number of conference room papers that were being issued, noting that there was no on-line access to such papers.

10. **The President** said that the Secretariat would take note of that issue.

General segment

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (E/2008/67)

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265, including 61/16

11. **The President** recalled that the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (E/2008/77) had been introduced during the coordination segment of the Council, on 8 July 2008.

12. **Ms. Greenaway** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the opportunity that the current year's general segment of the Council afforded to reflect on achievements and challenges in financing for development since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus. In that regard, the Group considered the upcoming Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha, to be the most significant international meeting on financing for development since the adoption of the Consensus.

13. During the current session of the Council, including the high-level segment, the Group of 77 and China had found it extremely difficult to secure agreement on full and proper treatment of thematic issues that were critical to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Such issues included food security and the global food crisis; trade policies including agricultural subsidies; debt; declining official development assistance; science and technology for eradication of poverty and hunger; sustainable development; and financing for adaptation and technology transfer to combat the effects of climate change. In each case the Group had been told that it should wait until the Doha conference. Consequently, the Group expected that those issues would be given the full proper and appropriate treatment in the follow-up agreement on financing for development.

14. The Council had a significant leadership role to play in tackling persistent and emerging global economic and social challenges, and in ensuring the full and effective implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations summits and conferences. The international community had fallen behind schedule in its efforts to achieve most of the MDGs and the rate of progress in many areas would undoubtedly slow down in the face of the current multiple crises, which were having a very severe impact on the poorest segments within countries. That made the Council's role even more pertinent. The Council must therefore methodically review the present state of implementation of various agreements and commitments, assess the constraints on implementation and the likely setbacks that current and emerging challenges would cause, and give direction to encourage and facilitate the coordinated effort that would be required.

15. The current session had also made explicit the impact which the continuing lack of coherence in global macroeconomic, financial and trade policies, and the politics and actions of international financial institutions and some developed countries, had on the achievement of global and national goals. The Group therefore emphasized the need for coordination and coherence in international financial policymaking and called for greater progress in that regard.

16. The Group of 77 and China again called on developed countries to meet their long-standing commitments, including in particular those made at the Monterrey Conference, and urged them to utilize the upcoming Doha Conference as an occasion to honour those commitments, including meeting the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national income to ODA.

17. The Group of 77 and China fully expected the Doha conference to undertake a substantive review of all elements of the Monterrey Consensus — not to pick and choose issues that were of interest to select developed countries while neglecting the position of developing countries — and the linkages among them, and to analyse not only new and emerging challenges to financing for development but also the way forward. It was important to consider establishing an efficient follow-up mechanism on financing for development, both for the commitments assumed in Monterrey and for those that would surely be made in Doha.

18. **Mr. Metelitsa** (Belarus) recalled that the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held on 14 April 2008, had proposed such new initiatives on financing for development as a currency transaction tax, a global lottery and a tax on airline tickets. While noting that the search for new sources of financing for development programmes should continue, he also stressed that such sources must be considered only as supplementary to the commitments already undertaken by developed countries in the context of the Monterrey Consensus.

19. Despite the promising market for trading greenhouse gas emission quotas, Belarus could still not participate in that system until the amendment to the Kyoto Protocol had been ratified. His delegation therefore called upon all parties to the Kyoto Protocol to complete the internal procedures necessary for the amendment to come into force without further delay.

20. The continuing global financial crisis, accompanied by an increase in the price of energy resources and foodstuffs, had demonstrated the need for the strict regulation of financial markets. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) should increase its efforts in that area.

21. The international development assistance system, primarily through the United Nations, should provide a harmonized approach to the classification of middle-income countries such as Belarus. The current lack of a unified approach was an obstacle to efforts aimed at institutionalization, which also hampered the role that middle-income countries could play both within the United Nations and within the international trading system.

22. The executive boards of United Nations operational agencies needed to ensure a more coordinated, harmonized and, where possible, unified approach to the provision of assistance to middle-income countries. For example, UNICEF could benefit from the experience of UNFPA and introduce additional criteria for implementation of its activities in countries where, despite relatively high levels of income, there were still problems in the areas of child education, health care and protection from violence.

23. It was also extremely important to assist middle-income countries with their economic reforms, particularly the reform of their energy supply systems. In that connection, the United Nations, the World Bank and other international partners should increase their assistance to middle-income countries through the transfer and introduction of advanced energy efficient technologies and new and renewable energy sources. In view of the significant financial resources required to reform the energy sector of middle-income countries, the World Bank could also consider extending lines of credit to that group of countries for the implementation of energy projects.

24. **The President** drew attention to the "Summary by the President of the Council of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development" (E/2008/67).

25. **Mr. Lebrun-Damiens** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the discussions held in the context of the high-level meeting and dealing with the theme of "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the implementation of the Monterrey consensus". As the leading donor of development assistance worldwide, the European Union remained entirely dedicated to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, the integrity of which must be preserved. The European

Union intended to play a key role during the Doha Conference and was contributing actively to the preparatory process.

26. It was important to emphasize the involvement of civil society and the private sector in the implementation of and follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus. The Monterrey process must remain inclusive and transparent. The important meetings to be held before Doha would be part of the preparation of that event. That was particularly the case for the high-level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs", to be held in September 2008. The European Union also looked forward to the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra from 2 to 4 September 2008. Improving the effectiveness of aid was essential to ensuring that development financing had the greatest impact possible.

27. **Ms. Artauli** (Indonesia) said that rising food and energy prices, financial instability and the continuing threat of climate change perhaps presaged the worst global crisis of recent times. Many countries were already reeling from the socio-economic and political impact of the food crisis and the slowing global economy. Given that unfavourable situation, it would be difficult for the majority of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and commitments, including the MDGs. Addressing the situation required not only that national governments should refocus their development policies and strategies, but also that the international community should strengthen global partnership, with the aim creating an international environment conducive to development. Consequently, the forthcoming Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to review the implementation of the Monterey Consensus was timely. Indeed, that Conference should thoroughly consider the six themes of Monterrey and come up with ways of meeting recent and new challenges.

28. Particular attention should be paid to the development financing concerns of middle-income countries and to financing for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. While it was doing its utmost to meet its development goals and commitments, Indonesia as a middle-income country continued to face challenges such as financial vulnerability, declining foreign direct investment and various trade barriers to its export products. Greater international support for the development of middle-income countries was needed, especially in the area of financing for development.

29. Climate change would make basic development in developing countries more costly and also make it more difficult for those countries to sustain the MDGs beyond 2015. The Human Development Report 2008/09 suggested that the long-term ODA requirements might be closer to 1 per cent of gross national income once climate change was taken into consideration. In that regard, dedicated sources of additional finance for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change would be needed, providing reassurance to developing countries that the resources would be both predictable and additional to other aid commitments.

30. **Mr. Heidt** (United States of America) applauded the efforts by the President of the Council to convene a meaningful spring meeting involving the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD. While the current year's meeting had been a step in the right direction, coming close to the goal established for it in the Monterrey Consensus, one key area for improvement would be to allow for greater involvement by the representatives of Member States in the work of the Bretton Woods institutions. Giving such officials an enhanced role would improve the substance of the meetings and lead to greater participation by those bodies.

Coordination, programme and other questions

(c) International cooperation in the field of informatics (E/2008/65)

Economic and environmental questions (E/2008/77)

(b) Science and technology for development (E/2008/31 and E/2008/48)

31. **Ms. Weesner** (Office of the Chief Information Technology Officer), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in the field of informatics (E/2008/65), said that the report highlighted the results of the close continuing cooperation between the Secretariat and the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Informatics. The Working Group focused on improving working conditions for delegates using the information technology resources of the Secretariat, and had already introduced such practical innovations as wireless Internet connectivity and access to power

outlets in meeting rooms, and had also overseen the creation of a CandiWeb site to support the elections process. In coordination with the Secretariat, it was developing an improved web portal to replace the current un.int website for the use of permanent missions; it was also preparing, in coordination with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), a new web content management system to be used by permanent mission staff. In those and other ways outlined in the report, the Working Group had been effective in providing a bridge between the needs of the diplomatic community and the information technology solutions provided by the Secretariat.

32. **The President**, drawing attention to the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (E/2008/48), recalled that the General Assembly in its resolution 62/182 had reaffirmed its request to the Council to oversee the system-wide follow-up to the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and had requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixty-third session, through the Council, a report for the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, as mandated by the Council in its resolution 2006/46, on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the Summit.

33. **Mr. Sarhan** (Iraq) said that the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector was extremely important, having the potential to contribute to achievement of the MDGs by improving economic development and increasing technological innovation and research and development. International efforts should therefore be directed towards the optimal use of ICT and making it universally available. Governments, particularly those of the developing countries, that wished to achieve MDGs must exert every effort to use ICT and provide relevant statistics that could be used in the decision-making process. Access costs must be reduced and workforce capacities improved.

34. Iraq had been one of the first Arab countries to adopt ICT and in the early 1970s had established specialized centres which employed ICT in producing statistics and administering censuses. However, the sanctions regime and wars that had affected the country in recent decades had had a negative impact on that sector. Because of its belief in the benefits of ICT, Iraq was devoting serious efforts to the development of the sector. It had established the Ministry of Science and Technology and introduced a mobile telephone network. It also planned to establish a national centre for geographic information systems, link a number of ministries to the Internet in order to form a nucleus for future e-government, and expand service provision throughout the country.

35. Notwithstanding the many problems Iraq faced in achieving requisite ICT development, one of the most serious of which was the destruction of the communications infrastructure, it intended, with the support and cooperation of the international community, to achieve a number of goals. Infrastructure was essential, as was increased investment in ICT sector projects. Cooperation with regional and international organizations and funds must be strengthened and focus placed on establishing research and development centres, attracting scientists and innovators, eradicating technological illiteracy, developing curriculums to encourage rapid advances in the sector and using ICT applications for education and training.

36. **Mr. Falatar** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that UNESCO had been very active in the area of science, technology and innovation policy, providing science policy advice to developing countries and small island developing States. In view of the need for scientific advice in informed policymaking, UNESCO advocated that all levels of government should establish and regularly review mechanisms for ensuring timely access to the best available advice from the scientific community. In keeping with the recommendation of the 1999 Budapest World Conference on Science, UNESCO capacity-building activities were aimed at assisting developing countries to promote consistent and long-term support for science and technology, so as to strengthen the human resource base in science, establish scientific institutions, improve and upgrade science education, integrate science into the national culture, develop infrastructure and promote technology and innovation capacities.

37. Science, technology and innovation capacity varied not only between developed and developing countries but also among developing countries themselves. In view of the need for science policy interventions to be evidence-based, UNESCO had

made considerable efforts to map science, technology and innovation capacity worldwide, and was also working with developing countries worldwide to reform their science, technology and innovation systems, and harness scientific knowledge by using scientific expertise more systematically in policymaking.

38. While it had been engaged in science, technology and innovation policy development in a number of countries throughout the world, the first priority of UNESCO in that regard was Africa and it had launched a science, technology and innovation policy initiative for Africa in cooperation with the African Union. Additionally, UNESCO was monitoring progress in science, technology and innovation through its Institute for Statistics, which was collecting and analyzing data on science, technology and innovation potential covering both input and output indicators. UNESCO was also helping to enhance the participation of women in science and technology, notably by establishing university chairs in those fields, and through the "For Women in Science" partnership with the L'Oreal cosmetics company. Finally, UNESCO planned to hold the next World Science Forum, entitled "Ten Years After" in Budapest in 2009, to take stock of progress made in implementing the agenda of the first World Science Conference, held in 1999.

39. **Mr. Metelitsa** (Belarus) commended the efforts of the United Nations to increase multilateral cooperation in order to develop a coordinated approach to the challenge of building an information society. The transition to a knowledge-based economy in Belarus was occurring at a swift pace thanks to the establishment of innovative technology infrastructure, including a high-tech park for software development. Furthermore, Belarus already had the highest telephone density rate among the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), with an average of 37 lines per 100 inhabitants.

40. The role of information and communication technologies as a catalyst for development was acknowledged by all nowadays, as was the enormous digital divide that still existed between developed and developing countries. Bridging that divide should allow all countries to enjoy equal access to the benefits of the modern knowledge-based economy. The role of the United Nations in that connection should therefore be to develop the requisite mechanisms and to establish the necessary conditions to meet that challenge. In view of its universality and moral authority, the United Nations should have the main responsibility for ensuring that information and communication technologies were used as a factor for development.

41. However, the vast majority of developing countries and many middle-income countries were still being denied access to technological advances as a result of their limited resources as well as unfavourable conditions for technology transfer. The international community should therefore help those countries to make effective use of new technologies in order to enhance their energy efficiency and productivity in various sectors of the economy, including the agricultural sector.

42. International scientific and technical cooperation to promote the growth and development of all States had clearly become a priority task for the United Nations in a globalizing world. Accordingly, the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had increased. His delegation supported the outcome of the Commission's eleventh session held in May 2008, whose main decisions and recommendations provided clear guidelines on how to strengthen and make use of national scientific and technical potential for the purposes of development in the key areas of international cooperation, and called for the decisions of the Commission to be supported and for efforts aimed at improving its work to continue in order to enable the Commission to implement its mandate effectively.

43. **Mr. St. Aimée** (Saint Lucia) said that, despite the adoption of many resolutions on science and technology for development and on technology transfer over the years, appropriate mechanisms for enabling the less-fortunate to bridge the technology divide continued to remain elusive. There appeared to be a need to concentrate on one or two specific areas with a multiplier effect, for example, the use of science and technology in industrial development, so as to push the process forward. In the context of small States, the application of science and technology to small and medium-sized development projects, agriculture, climate change, renewable energy and water-resources development held the promise of practical results. He thanked UNESCO for the credible work it had carried out in the Caribbean region through the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology and expressed the hope that UNDP and other agencies could provide further assistance in that regard.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its eleventh session (E/2008/31)

44. **The President** drew attention to the recommendations contained in chapter I, section A and B of the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its eleventh session (E/2008/31).

Draft resolution entitled "Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society"

45. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft decision I: Participation of non-governmental organizations and civil society entities in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions

46. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II: "Participation of academic entities in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development"

47. *Draft Decision II was adopted.*

Draft decision III: "Report of the Secretary-General on science, technology and innovation to be submitted to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twelfth session"

48. *Draft Decision III was adopted.*

Draft decision IV: "Report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its eleventh session and provisional agenda and documentation for the twelfth session of the Commission"

49. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

Oral decision

50. **The President** proposed that the Council take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (E/2008/48).

51. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations E/2008/SR.35

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

29 September 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 35th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 18 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Hoscheit (Vice-President) ..... (Luxembourg)

Contents

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the decade 2001-2010 (*continued*)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

08-42893 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the decade 2001-2010 (*continued*) (E/2008/61)

1. **Mr. Diarra** (Special Adviser for Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010 (E/2008/61), said that the report assessed the progress made in achieving the international goals and targets set out in the Programme of Action adopted in 2000 at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and reviewed the commitments of the least developed countries and their development partners in the seven interlinked areas outlined in paragraph 2.

2. The strong economic performance of the least developed countries had continued. Most of them, except those in the Pacific, had met or were on track to meet, the growth and investment targets of the Brussels Programme of Action by 2010. Progress towards human development targets had been noticeable in health and education, but less so in access to water and sanitation, owing to chronic underinvestment in the service delivery infrastructure in rural areas and rapid population growth in urban areas. Also, less progress than previously thought had been made in gender parity in education, and, in many of the countries, no progress at all in reducing maternal mortality. The statistics indicated that almost 50 per cent of the population in half of the countries in question lived in extreme poverty, and malnutrition also seemed to be worsening, seriously jeopardizing the achievement of the overarching objective of the Programme of Action to halve the proportion of those living in extreme poverty and hunger in the least developed countries by 2010. In at least 26 of them, that threatened to destabilize the political situation and trigger social unrest.

3. Almost 72 per cent of the population in the least developed countries lived in rural areas and depended on agriculture for employment, income and subsistence. Yet that sector remained underdeveloped and productivity had been declining, with the result that many of those countries, net exporters of agricultural products in the 1960s, had become net importers by the early 1990s. Forty-seven of the 50 least developed countries were classified by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as low-income food-deficit countries and 20 of them as countries in food crisis, requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. Rising global food prices had further increased food bills and reduced foreign exchange in those countries.

4. The report made a number of policy recommendations to address both the impact and the causes of high food prices, with a view to ensuring long-term food security and the eradication of poverty and hunger. The short-term strategy proposed included immediate, scaled-up humanitarian assistance to countries in food crisis, closing a $750-million gap in the World Food Programme (WFP) budget; social protection programmes, such as cash support, food-for-work programmes and school feeding programmes; and loans and crop-insurance schemes for small farmers.

5. The medium-term strategy proposed included improving the access of farmers to financing and markets, enabling them to purchase the agricultural inputs, machinery and tools and other innovations for obtaining higher yields; investment in better irrigation, transport infrastructure, electricity and research and development; and improvement of market information systems.

6. In the long run, the State-led green revolution should facilitate the transition to a high-value agricultural revolution led by the private sector. The proposed long-term strategy sought to ensure food security through full trade liberalization, which could significantly increase commodity prices and income for the least developed countries, and sought industrial improvements in the processing of agricultural products, light manufactures and, ultimately, high-technology exports.

7. The recommendations in the report were by no means exhaustive but they suggested a general direction. While individual paths would vary, the least developed countries needed to create wealth and decent

jobs and be able to compete on the international market.

8. **Ms. Greenaway** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that the report painted a mixed picture, showing some modest if precarious gains, but should give renewed impetus to implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. The Group of 77 and China continued to view it as the framework for a strong global partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners, vital for the achievement of national development goals set by the countries themselves and indeed of all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The least developed countries had done their part in trying to create enabling national environments and it now remained for the development partners to give greater support.

9. The uneven achievement of the Brussels Programme targets remained a matter of deep concern. The areas of weakness — access to water and sanitation, education, maternal mortality — were obvious. Even more disconcerting was the lack of progress in making trade a tool for poverty reduction and sustainable development in the least developed countries, and it was crucial to revive the stalled Doha Round of trade negotiations. The number of people living in extreme poverty remained alarmingly high in the least developed countries and malnutrition was worsening. That underscored the importance of implementing all targets under the Programme of Action and under MDGs 1 and 8.

10. The report highlighted the impact that current and emerging crises would have on the ability of the least developed, and indeed all developing, countries to advance their development agendas. Now more than ever a concerted effort was required by the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions, to combat the combined negative impact of the food crisis, the financial crisis, slowing global economic growth, rising fuel prices and climate change, compounded by declining official development assistance (ODA) levels.

11. The Secretary-General's report highlighted increased agricultural productivity as a necessary medium-term response to the rising cost of food. The Group of 77 and China were of the view that it should be a short-, medium- and long-term response, and called for greater investment in physical infrastructure and technological development. The Brussels Programme of Action had invited the General Assembly to consider holding a fourth United Nations conference on the least developed countries towards the end of the decade, and the preparations for the conference should begin.

12. **Ms. Jahan** (Observer for Bangladesh) said that the Secretary-General's report indicated some progress in human development in the least developed countries and steady advances in governance, but significant lags in areas like maternal mortality, access to water and sanitation or gender parity and, most dismayingly, a high prevalence of poverty. Structural weaknesses in the economies of those countries and their lack of the capacities needed for sustained economic growth and development were part of the problem.

13. The least developed countries were highly vulnerable to both internal and external shocks. The food crisis alone would drive 100 million more people into poverty and hunger, and those in the least developed countries, where poor households spent nearly 70 per cent of their income on food, would be the hardest hit. Those countries, because their crucial agricultural sectors were underdeveloped, were now net importers of agricultural and food products, and had billion-dollar trade deficits. Increased assistance as soon as possible by the United Nations system and all donors was imperative, and consideration should be given to the action proposed by the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. Climate change, another big challenge for the least developed countries, could put another 50 million people at risk for hunger by 2020. The energy-intensive economies in those countries were also vulnerable to higher energy prices, and they needed access to modern energy technology at an affordable price.

14. Trade was also critically important for the least developed countries, and, with only a 1 per cent share in global trade, they needed help in the form of the removal of tariff and non-tariff restrictions and artificial standards imposed by the industrialized countries, and the assurance of free market access for their products in both North-South and South-South trade. Trade-related technical assistance was urgently needed, and their accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) should be simplified.

15. The developed countries must fulfil their ODA commitment targets by 2010 and give well-focused ODA as direct budgetary support in a predictable and flexible manner. All the least developed countries should be made eligible for debt-relief programmes, and should receive unconditional assistance in sustaining their debt; and all their outstanding debt, both bilateral and multilateral, should be written off without further delay.

16. The special circumstances of the least developed countries were not being adequately reflected in the various reports of the Secretary-General relating to economic and social issues: each report should devote a section to analysing their progress on a sectoral basis. Also, at the next session of the General Assembly, a decision should be made to organize the fourth United Nations conference on the least developed countries.

17. **Mr. Yao** Wenlong (China), welcoming the good economic performance of the least developed countries in recent years, their advances in health and education and the expectation that most of them would meet the Brussels growth and investment targets by 2010, said that determined development efforts by the countries themselves as well as assistance by the international community had made those results possible. Nevertheless, the least developed countries had to overcome fundamental weaknesses before they could sustain economic and social development. The recent global economic and financial turmoil made their development even more uncertain. Rising food prices alone would plunge a significant proportion of their populations back into poverty and could even lead to political destabilization and social unrest, and they would be incapable of dealing with the severe challenges of rising oil prices and climate change as well.

18. It was the shared responsibility of the international community, and an imperative, to take concerted action to help the least developed countries in a number of areas. First, ODA should be increased to a level that would support the economic and social development targets of the Brussels Programme of Action. The developed countries in particular must honour their development assistance commitments and ensure stable and predictable funding. Secondly, there must be a focused response to the food crisis, with short-term increases in emergency food assistance to the least developed countries, and long-term reductions in the agricultural subsidies and protectionist trade measures that had distorted the international agricultural market, as well as increased support for the agricultural production of those countries, in order to help them move towards food self-sufficiency. Thirdly, trade preferences for the least developed countries should be steadily expanded, to raise their share of international trade above the current less than 1 per cent. Without more diversified exports, they would see their trade share dwindle further, and the developed countries must accord them duty-free and quota-free treatment for at least 97 per cent of their tariff lines, guaranteeing greater access for their products.

19. China itself had done much to help the least developed countries. Since 1950, as part of its South-South cooperation, it had made them the major beneficiaries of its many and varied development projects and training offers. In recent years, it had expanded its debt relief, trade preferences, personnel training and technical cooperation in support of the least developed countries and would continue to honour the commitments it had made under the Brussels Programme of Action.

20. **Mr. Djebou** (Benin) said that one of the objectives of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, to contribute to the renovation and invigoration of partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners by promoting mutual and shared responsibility for the timely realization of the seven commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action, would be easy to achieve if the external assistance strategies of the development partners were aligned with the least developed countries' national policies and strategies. However, the annual reviews by the Council of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 had consistently showed that there was still much to be done, despite the least developed countries' efforts to maintain an enabling environment for foreign direct investment and the financing of the development activities contained in the Brussels Programme of Action. Since it was important to examine the reasons for that lack of progress, he suggested that a future report of the Secretary-General might consider why international support was not always provided in a timely manner to assist the least developed countries in their development efforts. It would also be useful to explore ways of achieving greater coordination and

coherence between the organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations.

21. Given that many of the least developed countries would probably not achieve the goals and objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action, as noted at the high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, bold steps needed to be taken to improve their economic situation taking into account globalization, trade, foreign direct investment and many other important issues. In that connection, the recommendations of the Cotonou Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 should not be ignored and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States needed to take more vigorous action to achieve the expected results. He called on the Secretary-General to enhance the efficiency of the Office of the High Representative in order for it to fulfil its mandate of undertaking advocacy work on behalf of the least developed countries and ensuring coordination of the follow-up of the Brussels Programme of Action.

22. **Mr. Eisa Mohamed** (Sudan) said that the Brussels Programme of Action was a comprehensive poverty reduction and development strategy tailored to the special needs of the least developed countries and their development partners. With just a few years left before the end of the Programme, the international community was faced with multiple challenges arising from factors including financial instability, slowing global economic growth and rising food and fuel prices, as well as the negative impact of environmental degradation and climate change on economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction, particularly in the least developed countries.

23. While the Sudan had made progress in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action over the previous seven years, especially with regard to GDP growth and poverty reduction, it still faced various challenges, with child and maternal mortality rates remaining relatively high and HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases continuing to pose a serious threat. His Government nonetheless reaffirmed its commitment to achieving the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action, which it had mainstreamed into its Five-Year Strategic Plan 2007-2011. While it acknowledged that it must make every effort to mobilize its domestic development potential, in particular with a view to addressing the issue of poverty by 2010, it still needed the support of the international community as it sought to develop various economic sectors and enhance policy in a number of key areas. The role of development partners in providing the least developed countries with adequate financing and technical assistance to strengthen their productive capacities and remedy structural weaknesses, and the contribution of non-governmental organizations and the private sector were therefore essential.

24. Debt relief was still problematic, since many of the least developed countries with significant debt burdens remained outside the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries and Multilateral Debt Relief initiatives, while the conditionality attached to those initiatives was often difficult to meet. The least developed countries therefore needed to be allowed flexibility in that regard.

25. His delegation believed that the United Nations system had a pivotal role to play in assisting the least developed countries to achieve their objectives and goals. While most United Nations bodies had already mainstreamed the Brussels Programme of Action into their workplans, more concrete programmes and projects on its implementation would be desirable.

26. **Mrs. Beck** (Observer for the Solomon Islands) expressed concern over the fact that, while the Pacific subregion was off-track in meeting the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals, States in that subregion continued to be recommended for graduation from the list of least developed countries, despite their unique vulnerabilities. The current index formulae therefore needed to be reviewed and the specific vulnerabilities of different groups on the list should be taken into account in assessing their eligibility for graduation.

27. On food security, more assistance should be provided with respect to the transfer of technology to, and infrastructure development in, rural areas to address the problem of low agricultural food production. The least developed countries should also be offered better terms of trade and assistance in capacity-building, particularly in the area of food production. As for energy security, the current high

fuel costs were taking their toll on the national budgets of many least developed countries, especially Pacific small island developing states such as the Solomon Islands, and hindering their ability to sustain economic development. She therefore called for assistance through appropriate technology transfer in the area of energy development, with a particular focus on renewable energy. On the issue of primary health care, her Government needed support in its efforts to tackle the problems of rising child and maternal mortality rates and inadequate access to water and sanitation.

28. Climate change, meanwhile, threatened the very survival and livelihoods of countries such as the Solomon Islands. She therefore called on the international community and the United Nations to facilitate access to resources and technology that would assist her country in adapting to, and mitigating the impact of, climate change on its people's livelihoods. In conclusion, her delegation reiterated the call for a fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held by the end of the decade.

29. **Mr. Exantus** (Haiti), recalling that the Brussels Programme of Action had always been seen as constituting MDGs for the least developed countries, said that those countries were facing ever greater difficulties. Despite the relative progress noted in the Secretary-General's report, living conditions in many least developed countries were now increasingly precarious, and their populations were more vulnerable than ever to external shocks, as illustrated by recent surges in oil prices and the demonstrations sparked off by the food crisis. He called for urgent practical action to ensure full implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. In that connection, development partners, particularly donor countries, should honour their commitment to meet the target of allocating 0.15-0.20 per cent of gross national product to ODA for the least developed countries by the end of the decade. Without access to adequate resources, the least developed countries would not be able to implement their national policies and strategies, and the modest progress they had worked so hard to achieve could well be reversed.

30. **Mr. Pandey** (Observer for Nepal) expressed concern about the fact that stronger economic growth in the least developed countries had failed to improve the living conditions of the poorest of the poor. While continuing population growth, poor social infrastructure and institutions, food shortages, malnutrition and the constraints inherent in adapting to climate change had held back overall human development, the slow pace of technology transfer and aid mobilization had also hindered socio-economic progress and the least developed countries remained marginalized in the globalization process. The food crisis, rising oil prices and the adverse impact of climate change, increased the likelihood of seeing a reversal in the progress achieved by the least developed countries. Those countries would not therefore be able to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development without investing in infrastructure to develop their productive capacities.

31. Noting that his Government had already integrated the commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action into its development plan and eagerly awaited full implementation of the commitments of developed countries, he called on development partners, especially donor countries, to meet and exceed the target of allocating 0.15-0.20 per cent of GNP to ODA for the least developed countries. Additional resources were vital to those countries, not only for building rural infrastructure and investing in education and capacity-building, but also for taking urgent climate adaptation measures and finding solutions to the food and energy crises. Immediate concrete action from the international community in that regard was therefore necessary.

32. The least developed countries also needed a favourable financial architecture and supportive trade rules. Effective bilateral and multilateral debt relief measures were essential and action should be taken to boost the role of trade in development, for example by providing preferential and unhindered market access for all least developed country products.

33. Following its recent Constituent Assembly election, Nepal was at a crucial stage of political transformation and state restructuring, with priorities including sustainable and inclusive development, governance reform, and infrastructure development. Sustained and scaled-up support from the international community would be critical in enabling it to achieve all its goals.

34. **Mr. Falatar** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that over the biennium 2006-2007 his organization had continued to promote the implementation of the

Brussels Programme of Action, including by contributing to the 2006 midterm comprehensive global review; it had also, in conjunction with other partners, organized two special events for education ministers from least developed countries. The first, in New York, had included a review of how the Education For All Global Action Plan could be used more effectively to implement the Programme of Action, while the second, held during the thirty-fourth session of the General Conference of UNESCO, had given education ministers an opportunity to discuss their countries' priority needs with regard to meeting internationally agreed development goals, including the education-related goals of the Brussels Programme of Action.

35. Among other efforts to promote the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in coming years, UNESCO would contribute to further improvements in educational quality in the least developed countries, develop enhanced cooperation with the African Union and the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education, strengthen partnerships with ministries to address literacy issues in national policies and share good practice on women's right to education.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.

United Nations E/2008/SR.36

Economic and Social Council

Provisional
15 September 2008
Original: English

Substantive session for 2008
General segment

Provisional summary record (partial)* of the 36th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 21 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Hoscheit (Vice-President) ..... (Luxembourg)

Contents

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies

(b) Proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting. A panel discussion was conducted.

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08-43046 (E)

The meeting was preceded by a panel discussion on "An inclusive and coherent approach to climate change: the role of the United Nations system". The panel was chaired by Mr. Jean-Marc Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President of the Council. The panellists were Mr. Robert Orr, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Planning, and Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs.

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The discussion covered in the summary record began at 11.30 a.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies (E/2008/58 and A/63/16)

(b) Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011 (relevant fascicles of A/63/6)

1. **Mr. Stelzer** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs), introducing the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2007-2008 (E/2008/58), said that the Chief Executives Board (CEB) had consolidated its role of promoting coherence within the United Nations system.

2. The CEB had often been mentioned during the informal consultations on system-wide coherence at the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, where considerable emphasis had been placed on its role in ensuring coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. General Assembly resolution 62/208, on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, stressed that the purpose of reform was to make the United Nations development system more efficient and effective in its support for developing countries' efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals on the basis of their national development strategies.

3. Climate change was one of the Board's programme priorities and its High-Level Committee on Programmes had played a key role in the formulation of the United Nations system's contribution to the December 2007 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The outcome of the Board's work on sectoral elements of a coordinated response and an inventory of system activities had formed the basis for the Secretary-General's overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change (A/62/644).

4. The views expressed by Member States during that debate had led to an initiative, within the CEB framework, aimed at facilitating a coordinated approach to intergovernmental negotiations in preparation for the next Conference of the Parties, to be held in December 2008.

5. The Board's task was to review the challenges posed by the global food crisis and to adopt a common strategy in support of developing countries. In April 2008, it had called on the international community to fund the emergency requirements of the World Food Programme (WFP) as a matter of urgency. It also asked States to reconsider their policies on food export restrictions, to seek an early conclusion to the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations and to address the specific needs of Africa, the region most affected by the crisis.

6. In preparing and coordinating the implementation of a plan of action on priorities, the Board had established the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, which had prepared a comprehensive framework for action as a contribution to the policy debate held at the Rome High-level Conference on World Food Security in June 2008. The framework for action had later been sent to the leaders of the Group of Eight for their consideration and had been circulated to delegations at the current session of the Council.

7. The Board had focused on the need for clarity in the various African development initiatives within the United Nations system and had welcomed the launch of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Africa Steering Group and the Millennium Development Goal Africa Working Group, which focused on operational gaps in day-to-day cooperation between United Nations system organizations and international financial institutions.

8. The Board had developed a Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work and a document entitled "Trade Capacity-Building: Inter-Agency Resource Guide", issued under the auspices of the High-Level Committee on Programmes.

It was also considering a number of other programme matters, including the United Nations system action plan for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries during the period 2007-2010, aid for trade, and disaster reduction.

9. General Assembly discussions on system-wide coherence had highlighted the potential role of improved business practices in the delivery of results. A plan of action for the harmonization of business practices, which contained proposals covering all the major management functions of United Nations common system organizations in the areas of finance and budget, human resources, and information and communication technologies had been developed. The proposed activities represented a new level of commitment, by the organizations of the United Nations system, to realigning and harmonizing business practices; its implementation would take existing intergovernmental guidance fully into account.

10. The Board had endeavoured to improve its cooperation with other inter-agency mechanisms. It had achieved integration of the procurement network into the High-Level Committee on Management, established a legal network and provided support for the Delivering as One pilot projects. In April 2008, it had held its first meeting, at which the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) had formally reported as part of the CEB structure. The UNDG mechanism had been significantly streamlined and held regular consultations with the two High-Level Committees — on Programmes and Management, respectively — in order to ensure a clear division of labour. The establishment of an advisory group on country operations was also considered an important component of the Group's restructuring.

11. Turning to operational issues, he said that the CEB had taken note of the initial results of the Delivering as One pilot projects and the remaining challenges. Government leadership and involvement were key to ensuring that the United Nations system was in line with national priorities. Country teams were actively exploring ways for the system to respond to those priorities by joint thinking, prioritization and planning. In order to keep the annual overview report concise and focused, an effort had been made to avoid extensive treatment of other important issues. The CEB and the executive heads of United Nations system organizations remained firmly committed to promoting coherent approaches to system-wide themes, building on the mandate provided by their governing bodies, in order to help member States with their implementation of intergovernmental mandates. In light of the results of the CEB review, the Board had been strengthened in order to play its role with greater efficiency.

12. **The President** announced that as the Chairman of the forty-eighth session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination could not be present to introduce the report of the Committee (A/63/16), the text of his planned statement was being circulated.

13. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) said that greater effort must be made to strengthen the links between the CEB, the wider membership of the United Nations and, in particular, the Council. It was disconcerting that the dialogue with the Board during the general segment had been limited to a half-day discussion. Strengthening those links would promote greater coherence between the Board's activities and the perspectives of Member States and increase the level of transparency of its work. He suggested that the Council should hold quarterly discussions with the Board and that the High-Level Committees on Programmes and Management should brief the Second and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly, respectively.

14. Commenting specifically on the overview report (E/2008/58), he suggested that the effectiveness of the UNDG's integration into the CEB should be assessed. His Government was particularly interested in the role played by the Development Operations Coordination Office and the challenges it faced in providing technical support to UNDG, and in supporting country-level coordination through the resident coordinator system.

15. His delegation was concerned that the section of the report that dealt with the evaluation of the Delivering as One initiative made no mention of the role of Member States. Like many other delegations, it had repeatedly stressed that evaluation involved not only determination of the efficacy of the initiative, but also a review of its methodology and of the extent to which lessons learned were to be implemented elsewhere.

16. He would welcome clarification of how duplication between the work of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis and that of the High-Level Committee on Programmes would be avoided. Notwithstanding the explanation of the limited focus of the report that had been provided by the Assistant

Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, he believed that gender mainstreaming should have been addressed, especially since the gender architecture had been discussed and concerns that gender mainstreaming might lead to "gender outstreaming" had been raised.

17. **Ms. Ahlenius** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) reported on the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) thematic evaluation of lessons learned: protocols and practices, requested by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-sixth session in 2006 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/235. The purpose of the evaluation, which would be submitted to the Committee in 2009, had been to identify and assess the systems and mechanisms used to identify, capture and disseminate lessons learned in the Secretariat and to determine the extent to which they were used to enhance performance. Thirty-two Secretariat programmes and six system-wide coordinating committees had been evaluated. The findings revealed that most Secretariat programmes lacked a systematic approach to lessons learned and that there was no overall framework, office or mechanism that coordinated such work. Informal means were most frequently used but in cases where more formal methods had been adopted, they were reported to have had a positive effect on operational efficiency and programme effectiveness.

18. Informal communications among staff and personal experience were the mechanisms most commonly used by the programmes and coordinating committees working in the economic and social fields. That approach presented a serious challenge to the retention of knowledge within the Organization; within five years, the proportion of staff retiring from the programmes could reach 48 per cent and valuable knowledge could be lost.

19. A number of formal mechanisms for lessons learned had been identified in the evaluation exercise. "Post-mortems" were often conducted after the implementation of a specific activity in order to review and discuss problems and positive results and to identify successful and unsuccessful practices; such meetings were often held by offices responsible for organizing and servicing intergovernmental meetings and conferences, such as the regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Expert group meetings and international conferences brought together specialists who shared knowledge within their field, after which their expertise could be harnessed for future planning and implementation of activities.

20. Evaluations, another formal mechanism, involved the gathering and documentation of information on lessons learned in order to improve institutional learning and provide support for strategic planning and decision-making. However, the extent of evaluation activity within programmes varied greatly; for the 2004-2005 biennium, fewer than half the total number of Secretariat programmes had undergone any form of internal or external evaluation.

21. While programme performance planning and monitoring were also used, they played a lesser role because of the limited use of performance data for managerial assessment and decision-making in subprogrammes. In order to overcome that problem, some programmes had taken steps to ensure that lessons learned were effectively incorporated into the next cycle of project and programme planning.

22. Communities of practice and databases were among the two least commonly used mechanisms. Although communities of practice had proved useful in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank efforts to connect practitioners worldwide, they were rarely used in the Secretariat and databases were even less common. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) offered a rare example of a database that had served as a useful tool for storing and sharing knowledge, thereby enhancing programme effectiveness and operational efficiency. Outside the United Nations, databases had become a tool for the exchange of successful practices and the facilitation of decentralized cooperation among groups.

23. Coordinating bodies had played a limited role in the process of learning from experience, although UNDG played a more relevant role in that regard. Their guidance materials, distributed to all country teams, had been formulated on the basis of exercises in stocktaking and lessons learned. The thematic evaluation had attempted to identify obstacles that prevented programmes from collecting and using lessons in a more systematic way. Allocation of the necessary resources, managerial commitment and stakeholder support were crucial; while organizations such as UNDP were already implementing training and incentive systems to promote the use of knowledge

gained through experience, such systems were still non-existent in the Secretariat.

24. OIOS therefore recommended that coordination within and among programmes should be improved and that a unit should be created within the Secretariat to assume responsibility for coordinating and assisting programmes in the collection and use of lessons and best practices. Such functions should be made more systematic, and training in the various systems and mechanisms that staff and programmes could use should be provided. It was also necessary to raise awareness of the importance of documenting knowledge.

25. **Mr. Cooper** (United States of America) said that the CEB was uniquely positioned to leverage the strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations system, the various bodies of which should work together on cross-cutting issues and ensure maximum efficiency. The Board's recommendation that only independent audit reports completed after the adoption of its disclosure policy and subject to a variety of conditions and criteria should be released to Member States would mean that the policy did not apply to previously published audit reports. While that option could include granting Member States the possibility to read recent audit reports in the internal audit office and to submit any questions to the chief audit executive, it would give Member States a limited picture of the situation. The General Assembly had long since authorized OIOS to grant Member States access to its internal audit reports, a policy that greatly enhanced the transparency and oversight capacity of the Assembly. Such access was vital since it allowed Member States to exercise their fiduciary responsibility in ensuring the optimal use of funds. Original versions of old internal audit and investigative reports should be made available upon request to Member States, who should be free to pose questions as needed.

26. With regard to coordination and budget planning within the United Nations in the context of the proposed strategic framework for 2010-2011 (relevant fascicles of A/63/6) and the work of the Committee on Programme Coordination, he noted that some of the proposed changes to the strategic framework were of a technical nature while others appeared to be based on political considerations. His delegation would review the Committee's final report when it was presented at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

27. The Committee was not fulfilling one of its primary tasks, that of coordinating the work of the Organization. The concept of maintaining an intergovernmental planning body that was incapable of effectively overseeing and providing guidance on the basic elements of programming, budgeting, implementation, evaluation and coordination should be reconsidered. The work and functions of the Committee should be reoriented in order more closely to reflect the objectives for which it had been established and to ensure maximum use of the resources provided by Member States.

28. **Mr. Blake** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), asked whether a lack of resources was the only obstacle to the adoption of formal methods for making use of lessons learned; he wondered whether other structural factors were also involved.

29. **Mr. Stelzer** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs), responding to the representative of Malaysia's comments on the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), said that since the process of integration had only recently been completed, it was too early for its results to be measured.

30. Evaluation of the Delivering as One pilot projects was a three-stage process, the first of which was still in progress owing to a lack of resources. It was, however, expected to be completed soon and the results would be presented in the next overview report.

31. He recalled that for the sake of conciseness, the report had not attempted to elaborate on all the important issues under discussion. Gender issues were among the topics of great interest on which further information would be provided in the next report.

32. Duplication between the work of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and that of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis would be avoided because the two bodies operated at different levels; the Task Force was composed of the executive heads of United Nations system-wide organizations whereas the High-Level Committee's members were the deputy heads of such bodies.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations E/2008/SR.37

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

26 September 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 37th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 21 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Hoscheit (Vice-President) ..... (Luxembourg)

Contents

Non-governmental organizations

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08-43049 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Non-governmental organizations (E/2008/32 (Part I); E/2008/L.9*, L.13 and L.14)

1. **The President** invited the Council to begin its general discussion of the agenda item.

2. **Mr. Khoshnaw** (Iraq) said that his country's 200 civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were completely independent, working in such diverse areas as law enforcement, national reconciliation and combating corruption. They enjoyed the support of federal and local organizations and participated in all meetings organized by Iraq's various governorates.

3. Article 43 of the Constitution dealt with civil society's contribution to various activities; inter alia, civil society organizations educated citizens on their right to vote and to stand for election, constitutional concepts, the relationship between citizen and State, the role of the different branches of government and the adoption of a culture of non-violence.

4. The Ministry of State for Civil Society Affairs, had established plans and programmes aimed at making the best use of civil society organizations and channelling their efforts in support of the country's development. Every effort was being made to address Iraq's humanitarian crises and to accelerate its stability and security so that the new Iraq could take its rightful place in the world.

5. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba) reiterated his delegation's support for the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations; in order for it to remain credible, Member States must bear in mind, when participating in its discussions, the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31 on the consultative relationship between the United Nations and NGOs and the Charter of the United Nations. He also expressed support for the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and welcomed the fact that, at its resumed session of 2008, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had recommended that the Council should adopt a draft resolution aimed at strengthening that Section.

6. Later that afternoon, the Council would take action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2008 regular session (E/2008/32 (Part I)) and in the excerpt from the report of the Committee on its resumed 2008 session (E/2008/L.9*); an alternative draft decision on the application of the NGO Human Rights Foundation for consultative status with the Council, contained in document E/2008/L.14, was also scheduled for consideration. The draft decision, sponsored by the United States of America, would test the Council's determination to implement resolution 1996/31 in full. It ignored the Committee's recommendation that the Council should reject the application — a decision reached following an in-depth discussion and other steps required by due process — and would instead have the Council refer the application back to the Committee for further review. Such a move would be a waste of resources and would undermine the credibility of both the Committee and its members.

7. Human Rights Foundation failed to meet the criteria for consultative status with the Council for a number of reasons. First, some of its activities violated resolution 1996/31 and the Charter; its website, for example, listed activities, programmes and actions that promoted the subversion and violation of laws in a number of Latin American countries. Second, there was irrefutable evidence that Mr. Armando Valladares, Chairman of the Foundation's Board of Directors, had been involved in planning and carrying out terrorist activities in Cuba; indeed, in 1960, he had been arrested and tried not for exercising his right to freedom of opinion and expression, but for participating in such activities. Third, presenting Mr. Valladares as a defender of human rights was an insult to the Cuban people's intelligence, since he had threatened their lives with his terrorist activities and had been a police officer during the Batista dictatorship. Fourth, the Foundation's attempt to conceal certain voluntary donations, in violation of resolution 1996/31, called into question the transparency of its funding and suggested that it was trying to hide its ties with the Sarah Scaife and Shelby Cullom Davis Foundations.

8. He urged the Council to support the Committee's recommendation that the Foundation's application for consultative status should be rejected. Human Rights Foundation was not an NGO, but an instrument for

activities aimed at denigrating and overthrowing or subverting the constitutional order and governments of sovereign Member States. It was important to prevent the reputation of more serious NGOs from being tarnished.

9. **Mr. Attiya** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and in his delegation's capacity as coordinator for human rights issues, expressed concern at the alarming tendency to contest the technical recommendations of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in a manner that seriously disturbed the institutional balance between the Organization's principal and subsidiary organs. The Council did not have time to consider every application for consultative status in detail; the Committee, however, examined such applications thoroughly and engaged in extensive dialogue with the organizations concerned in order to ascertain whether they met the criteria set out in resolution 1996/31.

10. As a principal organ of the United Nations that fully represented the larger membership, the Council should make every effort to preserve the institutional credibility of its functional commissions. He was in no way suggesting that the Council should not review the work of those commissions, nor did he seek to lessen its authority over its subsidiary organs. He was merely pointing out that the Council had a larger responsibility to strengthen those commissions and their substantive role by deciding not to allow a Committee recommendation to be reopened on selective grounds; by ensuring that every Member State and NGO was equal before the Committee and that the latter considered matters within its technical mandate in line with the principles and procedures set out in resolution 1996/31; and by ensuring that those principles and procedures were applied to all without distinction.

Draft decision entitled "Application of the non-governmental organization Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales" (E/2008/L.13)

11. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), introducing the draft decision on behalf of the European Union, said that he disagreed with the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to the effect that the Council should decide not to grant consultative status to the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales.

12. The European Union was convinced that the NGO met all the criteria for obtaining such status and regretted the Committee's tendency, in recent years, to discriminate against NGOs representing the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. He called on Member States to adopt an inclusive, non-discriminatory approach when considering requests for NGO accreditation. The European Union therefore requested the Council not to adopt draft decision II, contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I), by which the Council would decide not to grant consultative status to the organization Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales, and to grant consultative status to the organization by adopting draft decision E/2008/L.13.

Draft decision entitled "Application of the non-governmental organization Human Rights Foundation for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council" (E/2008/L.14)

13. **Mr. Hagen** (United States of America), introducing the draft decision, said that since the resumed session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations earlier that year, new and important information had come to light concerning the Human Rights Foundation's application for consultative status with the Council. The Council should therefore return the application to the Committee for further review.

14. His delegation believed that the application deserved to be approved and that the Committee would have recommended its approval had it been able to review all the information now available. Because the Committee had been given only one week to consider the application, and because his delegation's request to defer action on it had been defeated in a procedural vote, it had not been possible to bring that information to the Committee's attention. He was not asking the Council to grant the Foundation consultative status, but merely to give the Committee another opportunity to examine the application.

15. There was ample precedent for such action. As the Cuban delegation had pointed out during the discussion of the application from the organization, Freedom House, at the Council's substantive session of 1995 (E/1995/SR.55), the Council had taken a similar decision on at least two previous occasions because new information that had come to light justified a review of the Committee's original recommendations.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (E/2008/32 (Part I))

16. **The President** drew attention to the recommendations contained in chapter 1, sections A and B, of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2008 regular session (E/2008/32 (Part I)).

Draft resolution entitled "Measures to improve the quadrennial reporting procedures"

17. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft decision I: Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations

18. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II: Application of Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales

19. **Mr. Delacroix** (France) requested a vote on the draft decision.

20. **Mr. Rogachev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had repeatedly expressed its concern at the practice of suppressing reports of the functional commissions of the Council. In particular, it was opposed to the trend, established in recent years, of attempting to reopen in the Council decisions taken by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in full compliance with its own applicable rules and procedures. Such attempts only exacerbated the politicization of issues relating to NGOs.

21. Because of their positive contribution, NGOs should be more actively involved in the work of the United Nations, in accordance with Council resolution 1996/31; however, in order for constructive cooperation to be possible, they must comply unconditionally with the resolution and its requirements for the granting of consultative status, which must not be subject to arbitrary interpretation. At its May 2008 resumed session, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had examined in detail the applications of the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales and the Human Rights Foundation and had concluded that they should not be granted consultative status, a position reflected in draft decision II. For those reasons, his delegation intended to vote for the draft resolution in its existing form and encouraged other members of the Council to do likewise.

22. **Mr. Attiya** (Observer for Egypt), speaking in his delegation's capacity as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, expressed concern at the growing trend to contest the technical recommendations of the Committee, which constituted a serious precedent. The Committee thoroughly examined all applications for consultative status and gave each organization an opportunity to present its case so as to verify that it was concerned with matters falling within the Council's competence; that a decision to grant it consultative status or include it in the Roster would bring tangible added value; that its aims and purposes were in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter; and that it undertook to support the work of the United Nations and to promote knowledge of its principles and activities.

23. Due process was key to the Committee's functional role. Those who contested its technical recommendations on the grounds of alleged politicization, selectivity or discrimination were themselves politicizing the work of the Council by campaigning for discriminatory treatment for certain organizations. Such attempts eroded the credibility and legitimacy of a principal organ of the United Nations and of its functional commissions.

24. At the 2008 regular session of the Committee, his delegation had proposed adjourning the debate on a certain organization's application for consultative status in order to allow the organization time to respond to the serious questions that his and other delegations had posed; that proposal was in line with the Committee's usual practice. While his delegation was disappointed that the proposal had been rejected, it was not in favour of reversing or altering the Committee's recommendation; it was far more important to preserve institutional credibility.

25. Again, he was in no way suggesting that the Council should not review the work of its functional commissions, nor did he intend to detract from its authority over its subsidiary organs. He was merely pointing out that it had a larger responsibility to strengthen the credibility of its functional commissions and that it should live up to that responsibility by

upholding due process and rejecting any attempt to subvert it.

26. **Mr. Siles Alvarado** (Bolivia) expressed grave concern at attempts by certain delegations to revisit the Committee's recommendations, calling into question its experts and their neutrality. Human Rights Foundation was a political organization that sought constantly to undermine legitimate and democratically elected governments. Any attempts to revise the Committee's recommendation that its application for consultative status should be rejected were unacceptable to his delegation.

27. **Mr. de Palacio España** (Observer for Spain) recalled that, at its 2008 regular session, the Committee, after a long debate and by a very close vote, had recommended that the Council should not grant consultative status to the Spanish NGO, Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales. At that time, his delegation had been far from convinced that its arguments in favour of consultative status had been taken properly into account. No one should be able to deny the Council, a principal organ of the United Nations, its sovereign right to decide whether to grant an organization consultative status, especially given the serious implications of such decisions.

28. The Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales fully deserved consultative status. For 15 years, it had done a commendable job in such key areas as education, social integration, prevention of discrimination and care of the elderly. Its work had always been inspired by the principles of respect, non-discrimination, freedom, solidarity and plurality enshrined in Spain's Constitution and underpinning all its laws; it respected, applied and promoted the principles enshrined in the Charter; it met all the criteria set out in resolution 1996/31; and, lastly, it respected the law, had not committed any terrorist activities and did not unduly criticize situations which it encountered on a daily basis.

29. It would be impossible for all the views and activities of the more than 3,000 NGOs in consultative status with the Council to enjoy the support of all its members. However, the role of Council members was not to share the opinions of NGOs, but to ascertain whether their actions were legal and whether they met the criteria set out in resolution 1996/31. While his Government respected the fact that other governments' views might differ from its own, such differences of opinion did not justify denying an NGO — especially one that respected the law and did not pose a danger to, or criticize any, Member State — the right to participate in the activities of the United Nations. To deny consultative status to such an NGO would discriminate against it and deny the Council the opportunity to hear a point of view that was necessary and beneficial to its work.

30. His Government had clearly demonstrated to the Council its respect for all States and all orientations, whether cultural, social or religious. It hoped that the Council would return that support by granting consultative status to the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales.

31. **Mr. Hagen** (United States of America) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Spain. It was not about subverting due process, but about upholding the Council's right to review the decisions of its subsidiary organs. To deny it that right was to say that it was redundant, whereas, in fact, it had the final say. His delegation would vote against draft decision II and he urged other delegations to do the same.

32. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote before the voting, said that while he recognized the sensitive nature of issues relating to sexual orientation at the United Nations, he was concerned that by recommending that the Council should decide not to grant consultative status to the organization, Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, had acted in a manner that was discriminatory and, thus contrary to both the principles governing the consultative relationship between the United Nations and NGOs and the democratic spirit of the Organization. The widest possible range of opinions must be represented; indeed, resolution 1996/31 confirmed the need to take into account the full diversity of NGOs .

33. To date, over 3,000 NGOs had been granted consultative status with the Council. Although the European Union did not necessarily share the views of many of them, it supported their right to express those views at the United Nations. Legitimate NGOs that represented a recognized group of civil society, of which the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays,

Transexuales y Bisexuales was one, had a right to make their voices heard.

34. According to resolution 1996/31, in order for an organization to be granted consultative status, it must be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Council and its subsidiary bodies; its aims and purposes must be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter; and it must undertake to support the work of the United Nations and to promote knowledge of its principles and activities. The Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales met all those criteria; indeed, most of its work, whether on human rights, education or HIV/AIDS, was in support of the Organization's activities. There was therefore no reason not to grant it consultative status and, as several delegations had pointed out, it would not be the first time that the Council rejected a recommendation of the Committee.

35. *A vote was taken by show of hands.*

36. *Draft decision II was rejected by 22 votes to 20, with 9 abstentions.*

Draft decision III: Application of American Sports Committee

37. *Draft decision III was adopted.*

Draft decision IV: Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2008 regular session

38. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

Recommendations contained in the excerpt from the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its resumed 2008 session (E/2008/L.9)*

39. **The President** drew attention to chapter I, sections A and B, of the excerpt from the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its resumed 2008 session (E/2008/L.9*). The Committee's complete report would be issued in due course as document E/2008/32 (Part II).

Draft resolution: Strengthening of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat

40. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council), reporting on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution, said with regard to paragraph 1 that the capacity of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section to carry out its mandated activities, including the consultative arrangements and the accreditation of NGOs in accordance with Council resolution 1996/31, had to be seen in the overall context of the resources and capacity of subprogramme 1, "Economic and Social Council support and coordination", which fell under section 9, "Economic and Social Affairs", of the programme budget. The Section formed part of the structure of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, which implemented subprogramme 1 activities. All post and non-post resources assigned to the Office or to subprogramme 1 were currently being fully utilized.

41. In addition, the Secretariat was investing in information technology: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was developing a Web-based toolkit that would enhance its interface with civil society organizations by providing a single point of entry for them to communicate with the Department and facilitating online registration of profiles and applications for consultative status, browsing and searching of civil society organizations and individual contacts, production of reports and mailing lists and management of documentation and correspondence. It would give all stakeholders access to best practices and lessons learned from current and past activities, sustain the level of support to civil society organizations during staff changes and strengthen the work of the various divisions of the Department that provided substantive support to civil society organizations and the Council, including the Non-Governmental Organizations Section. The toolkit would help preserve institutional memory and be used in training the new staff who were expected to join the Section over the next few months owing to retirements.

42. With regard to paragraph 2, he recalled that Council decision 2002/225 had requested the Secretary-General to establish a general voluntary trust fund whose terms of reference were set out in the annex thereto. The activities called for under paragraph 2 fell within those terms of reference and

might be conducted under the existing trust fund and financed from voluntary contributions, if available. The current balance of the fund was $15,300.

43. Thus, no additional appropriation for the biennium 2008-2009 would arise from the adoption of the draft resolution.

44. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba) said his delegation regretted that the Non-Governmental Organizations Section had not been given the funding needed to carry out its many mandate activities; he hoped that additional funds would be allocated. Every effort must be made to fill all vacant posts in the Section, and the new mobility policy must not be allowed to affect its institutional memory.

45. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft decision I: Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations

46. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II: Application of the non-governmental organization Human Rights Foundation for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

47. **The President** said that a vote on the draft decision had been requested.

48. **Ms. Moreira** (Observer for Ecuador) said that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had rightly recommended that the application by the Human Rights Foundation should be rejected. The Foundation had been involved in political activities against her Government in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of Council resolution 1996/31. Details of those activities had been outlined in a letter from the President of Ecuador to the Foundation, which her delegation had circulated earlier. She urged all members to endorse the recommendation of the Committee and to adopt draft decision II.

49. **Ms. Omeir** (Observer for Nicaragua) said that it would be undemocratic to overturn a decision taken by a Council body acting fully within its mandate. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, in keeping with Council resolution 1996/31, had, by a two-thirds majority, decided to deny the application of the Human Rights Foundation because of the terrorist background of some of its representatives and a lack of transparency as to its funding. It was surprising that one delegation was now challenging that well-founded decision. The Foundation was not an NGO but a terrorist organization, led by a notorious terrorist, which was trying to destabilize the democratically elected Governments of Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia. By questioning the draft decision, the Council would be setting a precedent that undermined the work of one of its subsidiary bodies.

50. **Mr. Al-Obaidli** (Observer for Qatar), speaking as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, recalled that in accordance with Council resolution 1996/31, consultative status should not be granted to organizations with political agendas or to terrorist organizations. The actions of the Human Rights Foundation had been deemed to be politically motivated. Furthermore, Cuba had provided the Committee with ample documentation of the Foundation's terrorist activities, and its application for consultative status had accordingly been denied. The Council must now endorse the draft decision not to grant consultative status; to do otherwise would affect the credibility of the Committee.

51. **Ms. Rodríguez de Ortiz** (Observer for Venezuela) said that the political activities of the Human Rights Foundation had been fully examined by the Committee. Her delegation denounced that organization's campaigns in Venezuela: it purported to promote free speech while in reality trying to subvert her Government's decision not to renew the broadcasting permit of one television channel, a matter entirely within the Government's purview; and falsely touted the cases of nine supposed political prisoners being held in Venezuela, of whom only one had been convicted of complicity in the seizure of President Chavez during the recent attempted coup, and was currently in prison. Another argument against the Human Rights Foundation was its failure to reveal all its sources of funding in its submission to the Committee. The Foundation had received due process in the Committee; it was unacceptable for NGOs to try to manipulate the Council with false arguments, and members should vote in favour of draft decision II.

52. **Mr. Taranda** (Belarus), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that in January 2008, the Committee examined the application for consultative status made by the Human Rights Foundation and had found that the Foundation's activities were incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and with Council resolution 1996/31.

53. The arguments against questioning the Committee's decisions were convincing. In the view of his delegation, its members had reached a correct and fully justified conclusion and had had access to sufficient information. An organization involved in the commission of terrorist acts and engaged in clearly politicized activities could not be admitted as an observer to a principal organ of the United Nations.

54. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that the Committee, of which his delegation was a member, had reviewed the Foundation's application in detail, looking into the documentation and considering all the information provided. It had become clear that the organization had a definite political agenda linked to one Government's concerns, and that it was suspicious on account of its non-transparent sources of financing and the illegal activities of some of its representatives. His delegation had voted against granting it consultative status in the Committee, and would do so again in the Council.

55. **Mr. Hagen** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation would vote against draft decision II. He reiterated its view that the Committee had made its recommendation with unnecessary haste and that new information had come to light. The Council should ask the Committee to reconsider the application; there was ample precedent for such a decision.

56. The Foundation was a non-profit organization that did not receive money from any Government and was financed solely by charitable organizations and individual donors. Its mission was to defend human rights and it had a representative structure, including an International Council consisting of 11 members with distinguished records in the field of human rights and a Board of Directors to set programme goals.

57. The Chairman of that Board, Mr. Armando Valladares, had been the subject of false accusations made during the Committee's discussion of the application. Mr. Valladares, born in Cuba in 1937, had been arrested and imprisoned by the Cuban authorities in 1960, following the Cuban revolution, and sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment for "offences against the power of the State". Following his classification as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International and a high-profile international campaign on his behalf, he had been released in 1983 and allowed to leave Cuba. In 1988, the Government of the United States of America had appointed him Ambassador to the then United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and he was still working in defence of human rights.

58. The Foundation's application for consultative status had first been submitted to the Committee during its one-week resumed session in 2008. On the last day of the session, the Cuban delegation had made serious charges, accusing it of slanderous attacks on Cuba, Venezuela and other United Nations Member States and claiming that Mr. Valladares had been a terrorist in Cuba and a member of the repressive police force of former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. Calling him a clown and a gang member, it had distributed various documents, in Spanish only, in support of its charges: a copy of a National Police identity card, two newspaper articles reporting his arrest in 1960 and a court record of his trial.

59. His own delegation had asked the Committee to defer action on the application until its next session in order to examine the documents and investigate the charges and had suggested that the Committee should invite a representative of the Foundation to appear in person to answer any questions. The delegation of Cuba had called for a vote on the request for a deferral, which had been defeated by 6 votes to 12 with one abstention, indicating that more than a third of the Committee's 19 members were unwilling to take action on the application so soon after receiving it. The decision violated the Committee's established practice of considering new applications during at least two successive sessions; delegations had also complained that no translations of the Spanish documents had been provided.

60. While acknowledging the care and thoroughness with which the Committee had always carried out the Council's mandate under Article 71 of the Charter, he pointed out that the Council had, on occasion, decided that an application should be returned to the Committee for further consideration. The Human Rights Foundation was just such a case. A number of new documents had been sent by the Foundation to the members of the Council on 11 July 2008, including a statement made under oath in 1988 by Jorge Robreño, President of the Revolutionary Military Tribunals of the Province of Havana at the time of Mr. Valladares' trial in 1960, confirming that Mr. Valladares had not been accused of being a terrorist or of committing any acts of violence and that there had been no suggestion, during the trial, that he had been a policeman under the Batista regime.

61. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba), speaking on a point of order, said that since the time available for explanations of vote before the voting was limited, the representative of the United States of America should distribute the documentation to which he had referred outside the meeting. He asked the President to call the representative of the United States to order so that the Council might proceed to vote on draft decision II.

62. **The President** asked the representative of the United States to conclude his remarks.

63. **Mr. Hagen** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that there were many other documents that refuted the charges brought by the Cuban delegation against the Human Rights Foundation, including recent letters from four past permanent representatives of Venezuela to the United Nations.

64. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba), speaking on a point of order, called on the representative of the United States of America to conclude his remarks so that other members of the Council could present their explanations of vote.

65. **Mr. Hagen** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, reiterated that the new information, which he had hoped to describe in more detail, had not been available to the Committee when it decided to reject the Foundation's application. If it had been available, and if the Committee had reviewed it with its customary care, his delegation was convinced that the Foundation would have been granted consultative status. His delegation would vote against the Committee's recommendation, contained in draft decision II, and urged other members of the Council to do the same.

66. **Ms. Abdelhak** (Algeria), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her delegation intended to vote in favour of draft decision II out of respect for the decisions of the Committee, as it had also done in the case of the draft decision on the application of the Fedéración Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales, contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I). She considered that the Committee had had sufficient time to consider the application submitted by the Human Rights Foundation; moreover, the detailed information provided by the Foundation itself clearly showed that its actions with regard to some Member States were politically motivated.

67. The representatives of the countries where the Foundation was active had made a submission to the Committee, denouncing its subversive political campaigns undertaken, in violation of the Charter and of Council resolution 1996/31. Information presented by a Member State also revealed links to terrorist acts, for which one member of the Foundation had been sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment. The Committee had adopted its recommendation on the basis of a transparent and democratic process and her delegation welcomed its vigilance in ensuring that the United Nations did not give a platform to individuals directly or indirectly linked to terrorism, against which the international community was united.

68. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the European Union was unable to support the Committee's decision regarding the Foundation since at the time that the decision was taken, several members of the Committee had indicated that they did not have enough information and had requested more time to consider the application. The Council should give the Committee time to take an informed decision after due consideration of the many documents circulated by various States and individuals. Its members would therefore vote against draft decision II.

69. **Mr. Siles Alvarado** (Bolivia) said that he was concerned not only about the historical background presented by the Cuban delegation but, more importantly, about the present and future activities of the Foundation. Since one of its stated principles was to promote democracy in Bolivia, the organization obviously believed that democracy did not yet exist in Bolivia in the form that it would prefer.

70. The Foundation took a totally partisan approach to the defence of human rights in his country. It had, for example, defended the right to free expression of a Cuban refugee whom his democratically elected Government had sought to expel for making public calls for its overthrow, and when a former miner had been brutally attacked by a group of university students with links to the pro-democracy movement supported by the Foundation, for the sole reason that he was wearing a shirt bearing the name of the government party, the Foundation had said nothing about the human rights of the victim. His delegation could provide much more evidence of the Foundation's attempts to overthrow Governments with which it, or

the interests it represented, did not agree. There was no need to prolong the decision on its application by returning it to the Committee since, even if the delegation of the United States of America had obtained new information favourable to the application, his own delegation could present far more extensive information on the activities in which it was really involved. He therefore urged the Council to support the Committee's decision by deciding not to grant consultative status to the Foundation.

71. **Ms. Zhang** Dan (China) said that her delegation, having participated as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in the review of the application submitted by the Foundation, supported the decision not to grant consultative status to the organization. According to Council resolution 1996/31, paragraph 2, the aims and purposes of any non-governmental organization applying for consultative status must be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, while, according to paragraph 57 of the resolution, consultative status could be suspended or withdrawn if the organization were shown to be associated with internationally recognized criminal activities. It was therefore clear that NGOs applying for consultative status should not participate in criminal activities, including terrorist acts or political activities encroaching on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, as prohibited by the Charter.

72. On the issue of terrorism, all delegations, including her own, agreed on the need to condemn and combat terrorist activities, whatever their form and regardless of the State involved. China had always respected the information on terrorism supplied by other States and believed that exchange of intelligence was key to strengthening international counter-terrorism cooperation. The evidence provided by the Cuban delegation showed that the Chairman of the Human Rights Foundation had planned the terrorist bombing of various public facilities, including cinemas, and had been found guilty of those activities under the law.

73. Moreover, her delegation believed that the Committee had considered the Foundation's application in a full and fair manner, with regard for due process, having discussed it on three separate occasions and raised 28 questions to which the Foundation had responded. The secretariat of the Committee had also invited the Foundation to attend a meeting in order to provide further clarification but, regrettably, no representative had been sent.

74. The draft decision was also in line with the Committee's usual practice regarding NGOs involved in terrorism. For many years, it had been resolutely opposed to terrorism of any form and, based on counter-terrorism intelligence provided by Member States, had decided not to grant, or had withdrawn, the consultative status of various organizations. It was necessary to give equal treatment to all information provided by Member States concerning the involvement of NGOs in terrorism, and a decision not to grant consultative status to the Foundation would therefore be in line with normal practice and in the interests of all Member States. Her delegation called on the Council to adopt the draft decision.

75. **Mr. Jesus** (Angola), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation was a member of the Committee and had voted in favour of Cuba's proposal not to grant consultative status to the Foundation at the resumed 2008 session. Stressing the importance of the Committee's credibility, he suggested that the Council should be concerned about any trend for decisions taken by Member States in a transparent manner to be reversed and that it should ensure that in coming years, the general segment did not spend its time considering draft decisions designed to reverse the outcome of a democratic and fair process. Out of respect for the decisions of Member States contained in the Committee's report, his delegation would vote in favour of draft decision II and urged other delegations to do the same.

76. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba) said that the Committee had rejected the Foundation's application, by more than a two-thirds majority. The Foundation engaged in a clear pattern of politically motivated acts against various Member States and there was irrefutable documentary proof that the Chairman of its Board of Directors, Armando Valladares, had been involved in the planning and execution of terrorist activities in Cuba. The financial information submitted in the application also showed that the organization did not comply with the provisions of resolution 1996/31.

77. Bearing in mind that the Foundation had been invited to send a representative to be present during consideration of its case at the 2008 resumed session of the Committee but had decided not to do so, and that

the Committee had engaged in an in-depth discussion of the case based on information received from the Foundation in response to questions raised by Member States, his delegation believed that the Committee had followed due process in considering the application. It was not the first time that an application had been presented and rejected in the same session; such a decision was taken whenever it became clear that an applicant organization did not respect the principles laid down in Council resolution 1996/31.

78. The Foundation was not an NGO, but rather a political organization serving as an instrument for activities aimed at undermining or overthrowing the Governments of certain Member States. His delegation would vote in favour of draft decision II and urged other Council members to do the same. In so doing, they would send a strong message of support for Council resolution 1996/31 and for the work of the Committee, underscore the will of the Member States to combat terrorism and demonstrate that commitment to truth and justice could be stronger than the pressure imposed by powerful nations.

79. *A vote was taken by a show of hands.*

80. **The President** suggested that for the convenience of delegations during the counting process, they might wish to raise their nameplates rather than their hands.

81. *Draft decision II was adopted by 29 votes to 19, with 3 abstentions.*

82. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia) said that, as Saint Lucia was not a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, his delegation had not played a part in the decision regarding the Human Rights Foundation. It had abstained from voting on draft decision II because, as a small island State, it lacked the resources to review the large volume of information on the Foundation received since the Committee had considered the matter.

83. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba) said that by adopting draft decision II, the Council had expressed its support for truth and legitimacy, for the Charter and for Council resolution 1996/31. It had upheld the credibility of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which had considered many applications for consultative status over the years, and had respected the Committee's practice of denying consultative status to organizations linked to terrorist acts. The United Nations had sent a clear message to the international community that individuals who planted bombs and committed crimes against its Member States would not be allowed to walk its halls.

Draft decision III: Complaint against the non-governmental organization World Union for Progressive Judaism

84. *Draft decision III was adopted.*

Draft decision IV: Dates of and provisional agenda for the 2009 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

85. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) recalled that, at the time of its adoption of draft decision IV for approval by the Council, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had expressed the wish to hold its 2009 regular and resumed sessions during equal time periods in January and May 2009. Because of the lateness of the Committee's request, the Secretariat had not been in a position to provide alternative dates at that time. The Committee had therefore decided to adopt the draft decision with provisional dates on the understanding that, upon the Secretariat's confirmation of new dates in response to the Committee's request, the draft decision would be corrected accordingly. He was pleased to report that that request could now be met. Therefore, paragraph (a) of the draft decision should be revised to read: "Decides that the 2009 regular session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations will be held from 19 to 28 January 2009 and its resumed session from 18 to 27 May 2009;".

86. *Draft decision IV as orally corrected, was adopted.*

Draft decision V: Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2008 resumed session

87. *Draft decision V was adopted.*

Draft decision entitled "Application of the non-governmental organization Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales" (E/2008/L.13)

88. **Ms. Khan** (Saudi Arabia), recalling that the Council had voted by show of hands not to adopt draft decision II: Application of Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales, contained

in document E/2008/32 (Part I), said her delegation was concerned that its views had not been accurately reflected at that time. She therefore requested that, before the Council took action on draft decision E/2008/L.13, on the same issue, the vote on draft decision II should be conducted once again, by roll-call instead of by show of hands.

89. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that his delegation shared the concern of the representative of Saudi Arabia about the vote on draft decision II. Rule 61 of the rules of procedure of the Council provided an opportunity for representatives to request a roll-call vote instead of a vote by show of hands if they wished. He asked the Secretariat for guidance on how to proceed.

90. **The President** said that the vote on draft decision II had been conducted in the customary manner; it had been clear which delegations wished to vote in favour, which wished to vote against and which wished to abstain.

91. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) recalled that after the members of the Council had voted on draft decision II contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I), they had also been called upon to vote on another draft decision II on the topic of "Application of the non-governmental organization Human Rights Foundation for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council", contained in document E/2008/L.9. On that occasion, the President had requested representatives to raise their flags, rather than their hands in order to facilitate the counting of votes. That suggested that the President had some doubt about the accuracy of the counting of the first of the two votes.

92. **The President** assured the representative of Sudan that his suggestion had been made only to prevent Council members from having to sit with their hands raised, not to make the counting of the votes more accurate.

93. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council), recalling that, following the vote on draft decision II contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I), the President, as was customary in the Council, had invited comments. At that time, an hour and a half previously, no concern about the conduct of the vote had been expressed.

94. Rule 61 of the rules of procedure of the Council provided for voting to take place normally by show of hands, except in the case of elections, and did indeed provide the opportunity to request a roll-call vote. However, rule 57 prevented a proposal which had already been adopted or rejected from being reconsidered at the same session unless the Council so decided. Accordingly, no action on the request of the representatives of Saudi Arabia and Sudan could be taken unless the Council first considered a motion to reconsider the original proposal.

95. **Mr. Delacroix** (France) said his delegation believed that the original vote on draft decision II contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I) had been conducted in accordance with rule 61 of the rules of procedure and that the Council should proceed immediately to take action on draft decision E/2008/L.13.

96. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan), speaking on a point of order, said that the way forward must be clarified before the Council considered draft decision E/2008/L.13. In particular, the concern, expressed by more than one delegation, that the votes on draft decision II contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I) had been miscounted must be allayed. While the two draft decisions related to the same NGO, draft decision II contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I) related to a determination made by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations while draft decision E/2008/L.13 originated in the Council.

97. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin) agreed that the concerns of some delegations should be addressed before action was taken on draft decision E/2008/L.13.

98. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan), speaking again on a point of order, said that the request made by the representative of Saudi Arabia and supported by his own and other delegations was that the proposal in question should be reconsidered and that the method employed in that reconsideration should be a roll-call vote. In accordance with rule 57 of the rules of procedure, the necessary motion to reconsider must therefore be put to the vote in the Council.

99. **Mr. Lima** (Cape Verde) said that the representative of Saudi Arabia had the right both to request that a proposal should be reconsidered and to request that a vote should be conducted by roll-call rather than by show of hands. The Council must therefore deal with the resulting procedural issue.

100. **Mr. Tarar** (Pakistan) said that his delegation supported the request made by the representative of Saudi Arabia.

101. **Ms. Hill** (New Zealand) said that she wondered why the concerns expressed had not been raised immediately after the vote on draft decision II contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I). While recognizing the prerogatives of delegations, it was not clear whether the exceptional circumstances for which rule 57 was applicable existed in the case at hand. She cautioned against setting a precedent and urged that the matter be considered with care.

102. **Mr. Majoor** (Netherlands) said that his delegation shared the views of the delegation of New Zealand. Rule 57, on the reconsideration of proposals, fell within Chapter X of the rules of procedure, on the conduct of business, whereas rule 61, on the method of voting, fell within Chapter XI, on voting and elections. Since the representative of Saudi Arabia's request related not to the substance of the proposal but to the method used to vote on it, reconsideration of the proposal did not seem appropriate.

103. **The President** recalled that pursuant to rule 57, only two representatives opposing a motion to reconsider a proposal were permitted to speak; the motion must then be put to the vote.

104. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan), speaking again on a point of order, said that his delegation wished the vote on the motion to be conducted by roll-call.

105. **Mr. Delacroix** (France) said that his delegation saw no grounds for reconsidering a proposal on which a vote had already been taken in full compliance with rule 61. The representative of Saudi Arabia had had the opportunity to request a roll-call vote when the proposal had been put to the Council for consideration.

106. **Ms. Hill** (New Zealand) reiterated her delegation's view that any concerns regarding the vote on draft decision II should have been raised at the time of the vote and that reconsideration of the proposal risked creating an undesirable precedent.

107. **The President** suggested that in accordance with rule 57 of the rules of procedure, the Council should take action on the motion to resubmit draft decision II to a vote.

108. *A roll-call vote was taken on the motion to take a new vote on draft decision II contained in document E/2008/32 (Part I).*

109. *Romania, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, China, Congo, Cuba, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Niger, Pakistan, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan.

Against:

Austria, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, El Salvador, France, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining:

Barbados, Mozambique, Philippines.

110. *The motion was adopted by 27 votes to 23, with 3 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.